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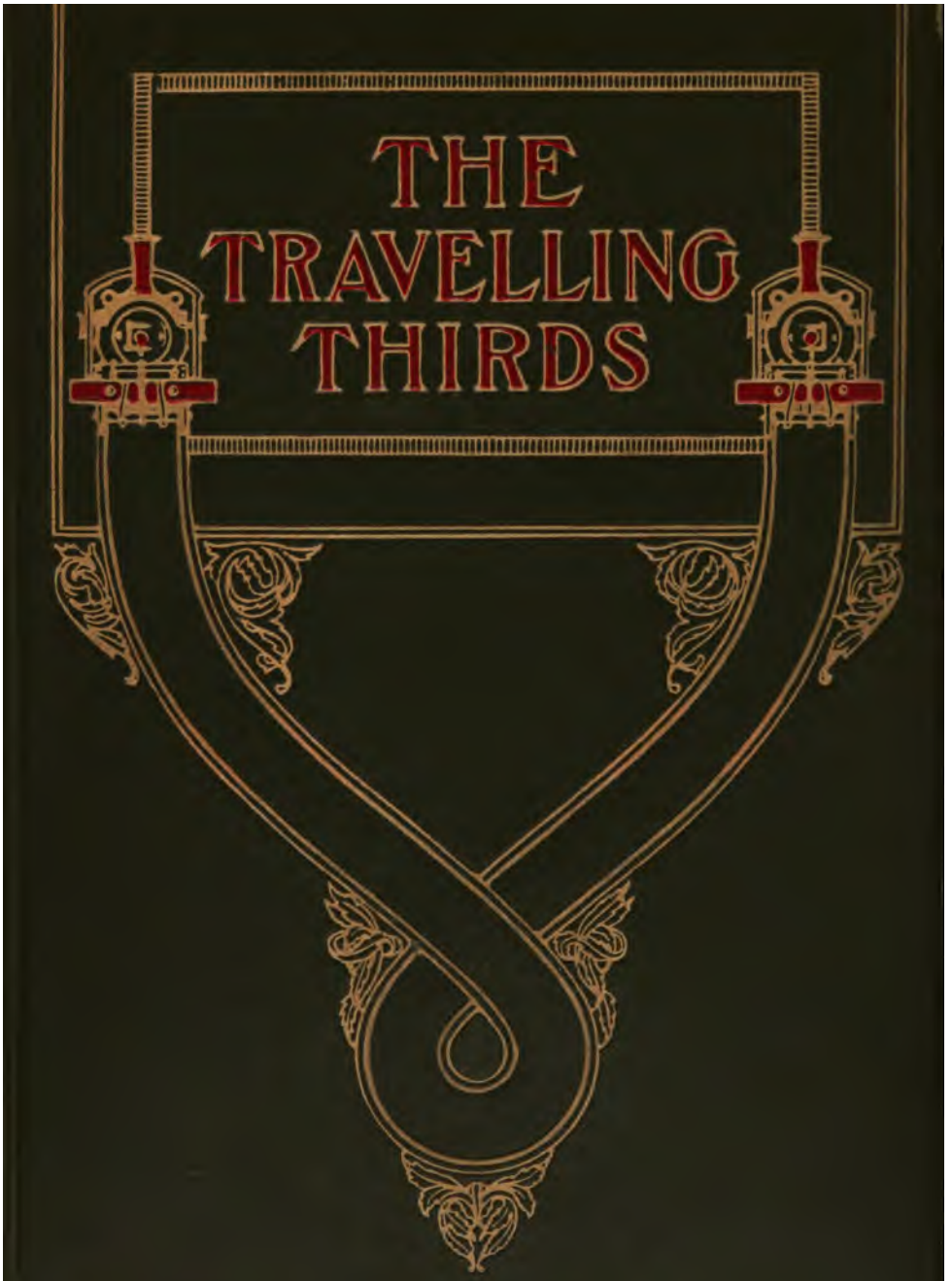
THE TRAVELLING THIRDS



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The Travelling Thirds

By

Gertrude Atherton

Author of
"Rulers of Kings" "The Conqueror"
"The Bell in the Fog" etc.

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The Travelling Thirds

The Travelling Thirds

I

HE California cousin of the Lyman T. Moultons — a name too famous to be shorn —stood apart from the perturbed group, her feet boyishly asunder, her head thrown back. Above her hung the thick white clusters of the acacia,[1] drooping abundantly, opaque and luminous in the soft masses of green, heavy with perfume. All Lyons seemed to have yielded itself to the intoxicating fragrance of its favorite tree.

In the Place Carnot, at least, there was not a murmur. The Moultons had hushed in thought their four variations on the ag-

[1] The acacia of Europe is identical with the American locust.

gressive American key, although perhaps insensible to the voluptuous offering of the grove. Mrs. Moulton, had her senses responded to the sweet and drowsy afternoon, would have resented the experience as immoral; and as it was her pale-blue gaze rested disapprovingly on the rapt figure of her husband's second cousin. The short skirt and the covert coat of ungraceful length, its low pockets always inviting the hands of its owner, had roused more than once her futile protest, and to-day they seemed to hang limp with a sense of incongruity beneath the half-closed eyes and expanded nostrils of the young Californian.

It was not possible for nature to struggle triumphant through the disguise this beneficiary chose to assume, but there was an unwilling conviction in the Moulton family that when Catalina arrayed herself as other women she would blossom forth into something of a beauty. Even her stiff hat half covered her brow and rich brown hair, but her eyes, long and dark and far apart, rarely failed to arrest other eyes, immobile as was their common expression.

Always independent of her fellow-mortals, and peculiarly of her present companions, she was a happy pagan at the moment, and meditating a solitary retreat to another grove of acacias down by the Saône, when her attention was claimed by Mr. Moulton.

"Would you mind coming here a moment, Catalina?" he asked, in a voice whose roll and cadence told that he had led in family prayers these many years, if not in meeting. "After all, it is your suggestion, and I think you should present the case. I have done it very badly, and they don't seem inclined to listen to me."

He smiled apologetically, but there was a faint twinkle in his eye which palliated the somewhat sanctimonious expression of the lower part of his face. Blond and cherubic in youth, his countenance had grown in dignity as time changed its tints to drab and gray, reclaimed the superfluous flesh of his face, and drew the strong lines that are the half of a man's good looks. He, too, had his hands in his pockets, and he stood in front of his wife and daughters, who sat on a bench in the perfumed shade of the acacias.

His cousin once removed dragged down her eyes and scowled, without attempt at dissimulation. In a moment, however, she came forward with a manifest attempt to be human and normal. Mrs. Moulton stiffened her spine as if awaiting an assault, and her oldest daughter, a shade more formal and correct, more afraid of doing the wrong thing, fixed a cold and absent eye upon the statue to liberty in the centre of the Place. Only the second daughter, Lydia, just departing from her first quarter-century, turned to the alien relative with a sparkle in her eye. She was a girl about whose pink-and-white-and-golden prettiness there was neither question nor enthusiasm, and her thin, graceful figure and alertly poised head received such enhancement as her slender purse afforded. She wore—need I record it?—a travelling-suit of dark-blue brilliantine, short—but at least three inches longer than Catalina's—and a large hat about whose brim fluttered a blue veil. She admired and a little feared the recent acquisition from California, experiencing for the first time in her life a pleasing suspense in the

vagaries of an unusual character. She and all that hitherto pertained to her belonged to that highly refined middle class nowhere so formal and exacting as in the land of the free.

Catalina, who never permitted her relatives to suspect that she was shy, assumed her most stolid expression and abrupt tones.

"It is simple enough. We can go to Spain if we travel third class, and we can't if we don't. I want to see Spain more than any country in Europe. I have heard you say more than once that you were wild to see it—the Alhambra and all that—well, anxious, then," as Mrs. Moulton raised a protesting eyebrow. "I'm wild, if you like. I'd walk, go on mule-back; in short, I'll go alone if you won't take me."

"You will do what?" The color came into Mrs. Moulton's faded cheek, and she squared herself as for an encounter. Open friction was infrequent, for Mrs. Moulton was nothing if not diplomatic, and Catalina was indifferent. Nevertheless, encounters there had been, and at the finish the Californian had invariably held the middle of

the field, insolent and victorious; and Mrs. Moulton had registered a vow that sooner or later she would wave the colors over the prostrate foe.

For thirty-two years she had merged, submerged, her individuality, but in these last four months she had been possessed by a waxing revolt, of an almost passionate desire for a victorious moment. It was her first trip abroad, and she had followed where her energetic husband and daughters listed. Hardly once had she been consulted. Perhaps, removed for the first time from the stultifying environment of habit, she had come to realize what slight rewards are the woman's who flings her very soul at the feet of others. It was too late to attempt to be an individual in her own family; even did she find the courage she must continue to accept their excessive care—she had a mild form of invalidism—and endeavor to feel grateful that she was owned by the kindest of husbands, and daughters no more selfish than the average; but since the advent of Catalina all the rebellion left in her had become compact and alert. Here was

an utterly antagonistic temperament, one beyond her comprehension, individual in a fashion that offended every sensibility; cool, wary, insolently suggesting that she purposed to stalk through life in that hideous get-up, pursuing the unorthodox. She was not only indomitable youth but indomitable savagery, and Mrs. Moulton, of the old and cold Eastern civilization, bristled with a thrill that was almost rapture whenever this unwelcome relative of her husband stared at her in contemptuous silence.

"You will do what? The suggestion that we travel third class is offensive enough—but are you aware that Spanish women never travel even first class alone?"

"I don't see what that has to do with me. I'm not Spanish; they would assume that I was 'no lady' and take no further notice of me; or, if they did—well, I can take care of myself. As for travelling third class, I can't see that it is any more undignified than travelling second, and its chief recommendations, after its cheapness, are that it won't be so deadly respectable as second, and that we'll meet nice, dirty, picturesque,

excitable peasants instead of dowdy middle-class people who want all the windows shut. The third-class carriages are generally big, open cars like ours, with wooden seats—no microbes—and at this time of the year all the windows will be open. Now, you can think it over. I am going to invest twenty francs in a Baedeker and study my route."

She nodded to Mr. Moulton, dropped an almost imperceptible eyelash at Lydia, and, ignoring the others, strode off belligerently towards the Place Bellecour.

Mrs. Moulton turned white. She set her lips. "I shall not go," she announced.

"My love," protested her husband, mildly, "I am afraid she has placed us in a position where we shall have to go." He was secretly delighted. "Spain, as you justly remarked, is the most impossible country in Europe for the woman alone, and she is the child of my dead cousin and old college chum. When we are safely home again I shall have a long talk with her and arrive at a definite understanding of this singular character, but over here I cannot permit

her to make herself—and us—notorious. I am sure you will agree with me, my love. My only fear is that you may find the slow trains and wooden seats fatiguing—although I shall buy an extra supply of air-cushions, and we will get off whenever you feel tired."

"Do say yes, mother," pleaded her youngest born. "It will almost be an adventure, and I've never had anything approaching an adventure in my life. I'm sure even Jane will enjoy it."

"I loathe travelling," said the elder Miss Moulton, with energy. "It's nothing but reading Baedeker, stalking through churches and picture-galleries, and rushing for trains, loaded down with hand-baggage. I feel as if I never wanted to see another thing in my life. Of course I'm glad I've seen London and Paris and Rome, but the discomforts and privations of travel far outweigh the advantages. I haven't the slightest desire to see Spain, or any more down-at-the-heel European countries; America will satisfy me for the rest of my life. As for travelling third class—the very idea is low and horrid. It is bad enough to travel

second, and if we did think so little of ourselves as to travel third—just think of its being found out! Where would our social position be—father's great influence? As for that California savage, the mere fact that she makes a suggestion—"

"My dear," remonstrated her father, "Catalina is a most well-conducted young woman. She has not given me a moment of anxiety, and I think her suggestion a really opportune one, for it will enable us to see Spain and give me much valuable literary material. Of course, I do not like the idea of travelling third class myself, and I only wish I could afford to take you all in the train de luxe."

"You are a perfect dear," announced Lydia, "and give us everything we want. And if we went in the luxe we couldn't see any nice little out-of-the-way places and would soon become blasé, which would be dreadful. Jane at first enjoyed it as much as we did, and I could go on forever. No one need ever know that we went third, and when we are at home we will have something else to talk about except the ever-

lasting Italy and England and Paris. Do consent, mother."

This was an unusual concession, and Mrs. Moulton was a trifle mollified. Besides, if her favorite child's heart was set upon Spain, that dyed the matter with a different complexion; she could defer her subjection of the Californian, and, tired as she was, she was by no means averse to seeing Spain herself. Nevertheless, she rose with dignity and gathered her cape about her.

"You and your father will settle the matter to suit yourselves," she said, with that access of politeness in which the down-trodden manifest their sense of injury. "But I have no hesitation in saying that I never before heard a gentlewoman"—she had the true middle-class horror of the word "lady"—"express a desire to travel third, and I think it will be a most unbecoming performance. Moreover, I doubt if anything can make us comfortable; we are reasonably sure to become infested with vermin and be made ill by the smell of garlic. I have had my say, however, and shall now go and lie down."

As she moved up the path, her step measured, her spine protestant, her husband ran after and drew her arm through his. He nodded over his shoulder to his youngest daughter, and Lydia, deprecating further argument, went swiftly off in search of Catalina.

II

"LET us get out and race it," suggested Catalina; but she spoke with the accent of indolent content, and hung over the door of the leisurely train, giving no heed beyond a polite nod to the nervous protests of Mrs. Moulton. That good lady, surrounded by air-cushions, which the various members of her attentive family distended at stated intervals, had propped herself in a corner, determined to let no expression of fatigue escape her, and enjoying herself in her own fashion. The material discomforts of travel certainly overbalanced the æsthetic delights, but, at least, she was seeing the Europe she had dreamed of so ardently in her youth. Jane sat in another corner reading a volume of Pater. It was impossible to turn her back on the scenery, for the

seats ran from east to west and they were travelling due south, but she could ignore it, and that she did.

They were in a large, open car furnished with wooden seats and a door for each aisle. The carriage was not dirty, and all the windows were open; moreover, it harbored, so far, no natives beyond two nuns and a priest, who ate cherries continually and talked all at once with the rapidity of ignited firecrackers and with no falling inflection. The Moultons had taken possession of the last compartment and sat with their backs to the wall, but Catalina, disdaining such poor apology for comfort, had the next to herself, and when not hanging over the door rambled back and forth. Mr. Moulton and Lydia alternately read Baedeker and leaned forward with exclamations of approval.

But although Catalina had responded amiably to Lydia's expression of contempt for Spanish methods of transit, the ambling train suited her less energetic nature and enabled her to study the country that had mothered her own. She stared hard at the blue and tumbled masses of the Pyrenees

with their lofty fields of snow glittering in a delicate mist, the same frozen solitude through which Hannibal marched two thousand years ago, longing, perhaps, for the hot, brown plain of Ampurdan below and the familiar murmur of the bright waters that rimmed it. The sun was hot, and all that quivering world of blue shimmered and sparkled and coquetted as if life and not death were its bridegroom. But the Mediterranean, like other seas, is a virago at heart and only dances and sways like a Spanish beauty when out where there is naught to oppose her; for centuries she has been snarling and clawing the rocky headlands, her white fangs never failing to capture their daily morsel, and never content.

Catalina loved the sea and hated it. Today she was in no mood to give it anything and turned her back upon it, her eyes travelling from the remote, disdainful beauty of the mountains down over the vineyards and villages, leaning far out to catch a last glimpse of that most characteristic object in a Spanish landscape—a huge and almost circular mass of rock rising abruptly from

the plain, brown, barren, its apex set with a fortified castle, an old brown town clinging desperately to the inhospitable sides. The castle may be in ruins, but men and women still crawl lazily up and down the perpendicular streets, too idle or too poor to get away from the soil, with its dust of ancestral blood. The descendants of warriors slept and loafed and begged in the sun, thankful for a tortilla a day and dreading nothing this side of Judgment but the visit of the tax-gatherer. To escape the calls of the remorseless one, many who owned not even a little vineyard on the plain slept in the hollowed side of a hill and made the earth their pillow.

"Brutes!" said Catalina, meaning the government.

"Why don't they come to America?" asked Lydia, wonderingly. "Look at that old woman out in the field. That is the most shocking thing you see in Europe—women in the fields everywhere."

Catalina, indolent in some respects, waged eternal war with the one-sided. "Your factories are far worse," she asserted. "They

are really horrible, for the women stand on their feet all day with a ceaseless din tearing at their nerves and never a breath of decent air in their lungs. They are the most ghastly lot I ever saw in my life. These women are always in the fresh air, with the quiet of nature about them, and they rest when they like. I think we are the barbarians—we and the Spanish government."

"Well, well, don't argue," said Mr. Moulton, soothingly. "It is too hot. We have our defects, but don't forget our many redeeming virtues. And as for Spain, backward, tax-ridden, oppressed as she is, one sees nothing to compare with the horrors that Arthur Young saw in France just before 1789. Spain, no doubt, will have her own revolution in her own time; I am told the peasants are very virile and independent. My love, shall I blow up that bag behind your head?"

He examined the other bags, readjusted them, and there being nothing to claim the eye at the moment, read Baedeker aloud, to the intense but respectful annoyance of his eldest daughter and the barely concealed

resentment of Catalina, who hung still farther over the creaking door.

The train walked into a little station of Tordera and stopped.

"Cinco minutos!" said the guard, raising his voice.

"Five!" said Catalina. "That means fifteen. Let us get out and exercise and buy something."

"Pray be careful!" exclaimed Mrs. Moulton. "I know you will be left. Mr. Moulton, please—please don't get out."

Mr. Moulton patted her amiably and descended in the wake of Catalina and Lydia. They were surrounded at once by beggars, even the babies in arms extending their hands. There were few men among them, but the women, picturesque enough in their closely pinned kerchiefs of red or yellow, were more pertinacious than man ever dared to be. Lydia, fastidious and economical, retreated into the train and closed the door; but Catalina disbursed coppers and gave one dirty little Murillo a peseta. She had spoken almost as much Spanish in her life as English, and exchanged so many elaborate

compliments with her retinue, in a manner so acceptable to their democratic taste, that they forgot to beg and pressed close at her heels as she strode up and down, her hands in her pockets, wondering what manner of fallen princess was this who travelled third class and knew how to treat a haughty peasant of Spain as her equal. She was buying an inflammable-looking novel with which to insult Jane, and a package of sweets for Lydia and herself, when she heard a shrill note of anguish:

"Mr. Moulton! Catalina!"

Mingling with it was the drone of the guard: "Viajeros al tren!"

The train was moving, the guard having been occupied at the *cantina* until the last moment. He was singing his song unconsciously on the step of an open door. Catalina saw the frantic whir of Mr. Moulton's coat-tails as he flew by and leaped into the car. She flung two pesetas at the anxious vender, dropped her purchase into her pockets, and, running swiftly alongside the moving train, made the door easily.

"I could have caught the old thing if it

had been half a mile off!" she exclaimed, indignantly, as three pairs of hands jerked her within, and Mrs. Moulton sniffed hysterically at her salts. "And if ever I do get left, just remember that I speak the language and am not afraid of anything."

"Well," said Mr. Moulton, tactfully, "just remember that *we* do not speak the language and have need of your services. Suppose we have our afternoon meal? The lunch at the frontier was not all that could be desired."

He produced the hamper and neatly arrayed the top of two portmanteaus with jam and bread and cake. Catalina placed a generous share of these delicacies on a tin plate, and, omitting to explain to her astonished relatives, climbed over the seats and made offering to each of the other occupants of the car. It had half filled at the station, and besides the nuns and priests there were now several Catalan peasants in red caps and black velvet breeches, fine, independent men, prepared to ignore these eccentric Americans, ready to take offence at the slightest suggestion of superiority, but en-

chanted at the act of this unsmiling girl, who spoke their language and understood their customs. They refused, as a matter of course, politely, without servility, and in a moment she returned to her party.

"You must always do that," she informed them, as she set her teeth hungrily into the bread, "and when they offer of theirs you must look pleased with the attention."

Mrs. Moulton sighed, and when, a few moments later, a peasant vaulted over the seats and proudly offered of his store of black bread and garlic, she buried a frozen smile in her smelling-salts. Jane refused to notice him, but the other three declined with such professions of gratitude that he told his comrades the Americans were not altogether a contemptible race, and that the one who spoke their language looked like a devil with a white soul and was worthy to have been born in Spain. He took out his guitar in a moment and swept the keys with superb grace while the others sang, the nuns in high, quavering voices that wandered aimlessly through the rich tones of the men. After that they talked politics and became

so excited that Mr. Moulton was relieved when they all fell out together at Mataro. He could then take notes and enjoy the groves of olives and oranges, the castles and watch-towers on the heights, eloquent and Iberian and Roman, Goth and Moor, the turquoise surface of the Mediterranean—never so blue as the Adriatic or the Caribbean—the bold, harsh sweep of the coast. Then, as even Catalina began to change her position frequently on the hard seats, and they were all so covered with dust that even the spinster visage of Jane looked like a study in grotesque, the horizon gave up the palaces and palms of Barcelona.

III

TWENTY-THREE years before the opening of this desultory tale its heroine was born on the island of Santa Catalina, a fragment of Southern California. Her father had begun life as a professor of classics in a worthy Eastern college, but, his health breaking down, he betook himself and his small patrimony to the State which electrifies the nerves in its northern half and blunts them in its southern. Jonathan Shore wrote to his cousin, Lyman T. Moulton:

"I haven't a nerve left with a point on it; have recovered some measure of health and lost what little ambition I ever possessed. I am going to open an inn for sportsmen on the island of Santa Catalina, so that I shall be reasonably sure of the society of gentlemen and make enough money to replenish my library now and then—my books are on the way. Here I remain for the rest of my natural life."

But he crossed over to Los Angeles occasionally. At a soirée he met the daughter—and only child—of one of the largest landholders in Southern California, and danced with no one else that night. She married the scholarly innkeeper with the blessing of her father, who was anxious to pass his declining years in peace with a young wife. The bride, for coincident if not similar reasons, was glad to move to Catalina. She was the belle of her time, this Madelina Joyce, and her dark beauty came down to her from Indian ancestors. Her New England great-grandfather had come to California long before the discovery of gold, bought, for a fraction, two hundred thousand acres from the Mexican government, and married, despite the protests of his Spanish friends, an Indian girl of great beauty, both of face and character.

The Pueblo bride had lived but two years to receive the snubs of the haughty ladies of Santa Barbara, her ardent young husband had shot himself over her grave, and the boy was brought up by the padres of the mission. Fortunately, he came to man's

estate shortly before the United States occupation, and managed to save a portion of his patrimony from the most rapacious set of scoundrels that ever followed in the wake of a victorious army. This in turn descended to his son, who, in spite of Southern indolence and a hospitality as famous as his cellar, his liberal appreciation of all the good things of life, and a half-dozen lawsuits, still retained fifty thousand of the ancestral acres, and had given his word to his daughter that they should go to her unencumbered. This promise he kept, and when Catalina was ten years old he died, at good-will with all the world. His widow moved to San Francisco with her freedom and her liberal portion, and Mrs. Shore announced that she must give the ranch her personal attention. The ten years had been happy, for the husband and wife loved each other and were equally devoted to their beautiful, unsmiling baby. But there were deep wells of laughter in Mrs. Shore, and much energy. She wept for her father, but welcomed the change in her life, not only because she had reached the age when love of change is most insistent,

but because she had begun to dread the hour of confession that life on an island, even with the man of one's choice, was insufficient.

Mr. Shore himself was not averse to change so long as it did not take him out of California, although he refused to sell the little property on the island where he had spent so many happy years.

From the hour Mrs. Shore settled down in the splendid old adobe ranch-house she watched no more days lag through her fingers. Attended by Catalina she rode over some portion of the estate every day, and if a horse had strayed or a cow had calved she knew it before her indolent vaqueros. She personally attended, each year, to the sheep-shearing and the cattle-branding, the crops and the stock sales. Once a year she gave a great barbecue, to which all within a radius of a hundred miles were invited, and once a week she indulged herself in the gossip, the shops, and the dances of Santa Barbara.

In the vast solitude of the ranch Catalina grew up, carefully educated by her father,

petted and indulged by her mother, hiding from the society that sought Mrs. Shore, but friendly with the large army of Mexican and Indian retainers. When she was persuaded by her mother to attend a party in Santa Barbara she rooted herself in a corner and glowered in her misery, snubbing every adventurous youth that approached her. She adored books, her out-door life, her parents, and asked for nothing further afield.

When she was eighteen her father died. She rode to the extreme confines of the ranch and mourned him, returning to her life at home with the stolidity of her Indian ancestors. Mrs. Shore grieved also, but by this time she was too busy a woman to consort with the past. Moreover, she was now at liberty to take Catalina to San Francisco and give her the proper tutors in languages and music. Incidentally, she made many new friends and enjoyed with all her vivid nature the life of a city which she had visited but twice before. She returned in the following winter and extended her fame as a hostess. Catalina found San Francisco so-

ciety but little more interesting than that of the South, and enjoyed the reputation of being as rude as she was beautiful. Here, however, her Indian ancestress had her belated revenge. Her brief and tragic story cast a radiant halo about the indifferent Catalina, whose strain of aboriginal blood was extolled as the first cause in a piquant and original beauty; all her quaint eccentricities—which were merely the expression of a proud and reticent nature anxious to be let alone—were traced to the same artless source, and when one day in the park she sprang from her horse and shook the editor of a personal weekly until his teeth rattled in his head, her unique reputation was secure.

The greater part of the year was spent on the ranch. Mrs. Shore loved the world, but she was a woman of business above all things, and determined that the ranch should be a splendid inheritance for her child. Her time was closer than she knew. In all the vigor of her middle years, with the dark radiance of her beauty little dimmed, and an almost pagan love of mere existence,

she was done to death by a bucking mustang, unseated for the first time since she had mounted a horse, and kicked beyond recognition.

Catalina resolutely put the horror of those days behind her, and for several months was as energetic a woman of business as her mother had been. She was mistress of a great tract of land, of herself, her time, her future. When her stoical grief for her mother subsided she found life interesting and stimulating. She rode about the ranch in the morning, or conferred with her lawyer, who drove out once a week; the afternoons she spent in the great court of the old house, with its stone fountain built by the ancestors who had learned their craft from the mission fathers, its palms and banana-trees, its old hollyhocks and roses. Here she read or dreamed vaguely of the future. What she wanted of life beyond this dreaming Southern land, where only an earthquake broke the monotony, was as vague of outline as her mountains under their blue mists, but its secrets were a constant and delightful well of perplexity.

For two years she was contented, and at times, when galloping down to the sea in the early dawn, the old moon, bony and yellow, sinking to its grave in the darkest canyon of the mountain, and the red sun leaping from the sea, she was supremely happy.

Then, in a night, discontent settled upon her. She wanted change, variety; she wanted to see the world — Europe above all things; and when her Eastern relatives, with whom she corresponded, in obedience to a last request of her father, again pressed her to visit them, and mentioned that they were contemplating a trip abroad, she started on three hours' notice, leaving the ranch in charge of a trusted overseer and the executors of her mother's will.

She found her relatives living in a suburb of New York, their social position very different from that her mother had given her in California. Nothing saved them from the narrow routine of the suburban middle class but the intellectual proclivities of Mr. Moulton, who was reader for a publishing house and the literary adviser of the pseudo-intellectual. Through the constant

association of his name with moral and non-sensational fiction, his well-balanced attitude of piety tinctured by humor, the pleasant style with which he indited irreproachable and elevated platitudes, his stern and invariable denunciation of the unorthodox in religion, in ideas, and in style, and his genially didactic habit of telling his readers what they wished to hear, he had achieved the rank of a great critic. As he really was an estimable man and virtuous husband, of agreeable manners, sufficiently hospitable, and extremely careful in choosing his friends, his position in the literary world was quite enviable. The great and the safe took tea on his lawn, and if the great and unsafe laughed at both the tea and the critic that was the final seal of their unregeneracy.

When Catalina arrived, after lingering for a fortnight in Boston with a friend she had made on the train, she liked him at once, unjustly despised Mrs. Moulton, who was the best of wives and copied her husband's manuscripts, hated Jane, and recognized in Lydia a human being in whom one could find a reasonable amount of companionship,

in spite of the magnetism of the mirror—or even the polished surface of a panel—for her complacent eyes. Lydia was innocently vain, and, being the beauty of the family, believed herself to be very beautiful indeed. She always made a smart appearance, and was frankly desirous of admiration. Like many family beauties, she had a strong will and was reasonably clever. When the first opportunity to go to Europe arrived she had reached what she called a critical point in her life. She confided to Catalina that she was becoming morbidly tired of mere existence and hated the sight of every literary man she knew, particularly the young ones.

"Of course, they are more or less the respectable hangers-on that give us the benefit of their society," she said, gloomily. "Those that scurry about writing little stories for the magazines and weekly papers—it seems to me a real man might find something better to do. We know all the big ones, but they are too busy to come out here often, and father sees them at the Century and Authors' clubs, anyhow. We hardly know a man who isn't a publisher, an editor, or a

writer of something or other—perhaps an occasional artist. For my part, I'd give my immortal soul to be one of those lucky girls that go to Mrs. Astor's parties; that's my idea of life. If a millionaire would only fall in love with me—or any old romance, for that matter!"

"Have you never been in love?" asked Catalina, afraid of the sound of her own voice but deeply interested.

"Not the least little bit, more is the pity. I wouldn't mind even being heart-broken for a while."

It was this frankness that endeared her to Catalina. "Jane is third rate, and tries to conceal the fact from herself and others by an affectation of such of the literary galaxy as make the least appeal to the popular taste, and cousin Lyman is no critic," she informed herself three days after her arrival. "Cousin Miranda is just one of those American women who are invalids for no reason but because they want to be, and I suppose even Lydia would get on my nerves in time. Thank Heaven, when they do I can leave at a moment's notice."

The Travelling Thirds

After four months of the friction of travel, Catalina had half hoped her relatives would reject her startling proposal and abandon her to a future full of dangers and freedom.

IV

HE brushed her hair viciously in the solitude of her bedroom in Barcelona; fortunately, the composition of the party always gave her a room to herself. "To-morrow morning I'll be up and out before they are awake," she announced to her sulky image. "This evening I suppose I must walk with them on the Rambla. Of course, if I had come alone I should have had to find a chaperon for such occasions, but it would be some quaint old duenna I could hire. I've never wanted my liberty as I do here in Spain, and Cousin Lyman will barely let me wash my own face. I never was so taken care of in my life—"

She ground her teeth, but nodded as Mr. Moulton put his head in at the door and asked her if she were sure she was comfort-

able, if her room was quite clean and her keys in proper order. Then he adjured her not to drink the water until he had ascertained its reputation, and to be careful not to lean over the railing of the balcony, as it might be insecure; the Spanish were a shiftless people, so far as his observation of them went.

Catalina flung her hair-brush at the door as he pattered down the hall to examine the welfare of his daughters.

"I've a mind to go up and dance on the roof," she cried, furiously. "One would think I was four years old. Papa was just like that when we travelled, and if all American men are the same I'll marry an Englishman."

After dinner Mr. Moulton, having seen his wife safely into bed and conscientiously determined to observe every respectable phase of foreign life, drew Lydia's arm within his, and, bidding Catalina take Jane's and follow close behind him, went out upon the Rambla. Upon these occasions he always took his youngest carefully under his wing. A wag had once said of her, while

commenting upon the infinite respectability of the Lyman T. Moultons, that on a moonlight night, in a boat on a lake, Lydia might develop possibilities; and it may have been some dim appreciation of these possibilities that prompted Mr. Moulton to favor the beauty of the family with more than her share of attention. But Lydia had a coquettish pair of eyes, and under her father's formidable wing had indulged in more than one innocent flirtation. Catalina raged that she was to take her first night's pleasure in Spain in the companionship of Jane, and ignored her protector's mandate. Jane, whose sense of duty increased in proportion to her dislikes, took a firm hold of the Californian's rigid and vertical arm, and marched close upon her father's heels.

They promenaded with all Barcelona, in the very middle of the Rambla, that splendid avenue of many names above the vaulted bed of the river. For nearly a mile on either side the hotels and cafés and many of the shops and side streets were brilliantly alight. Under the double row of plane-trees were kiosks for the sale of newspapers,

post-cards of the bull-fight, fans, and curios; and passing and repassing were thousands of people. All who were not forced to work this soft southern night strolled there indolently, to take the air, to see, now and again to be seen. Doubtless, there were other promenades for the poor, but here all appeared to have come from the houses of the aristocracy or wealthy middle class. Many were the duennas, elderly, stout, or shrunken, always in black, with a bit of lace about the head, immobile and watchful. Perhaps they towed one maiden, but more frequently a party.

The girls and young matrons were light and gay of attire; occasionally their millinery was Parisian, but more often they wore the mantilla or rebosa. Their eyes were bright, demure, inviting, rarely indifferent; and making up the other half of the throng were officers, students, men of the world, murmuring compliments as they passed or talking volubly of politics and war. Two young aristocrats behind Catalina were laughing over the recent visit of the young king, when, simply by the magic of his boyish

personality, eager to please, he had transformed in a moment the most hostile and anarchistic city in his kingdom, determined to show its insolent contempt, into a mob of cheering, hysterical madmen. The socialists and anarchists might be sailing their barks on the hidden river beneath, they were forgotten, the mayor hardly dared to show his face, and the women kissed their fingers to the pictures of the gallant little king hanging on every kiosk; the men lifted their hats.

It was the most brilliant and animated picture of out-door life that Catalina had seen in Europe, and the general air of good breeding, of mingled vivacity and perfect dignity, the picturesque beauty of many of the women, the constant ripple of talk and laughter, the flare of light and the dim shades of the old trees, appealed powerfully to the girl from the most picturesque portion of the United States, and in whom scenes of mere fashion and frivolity aroused a resentment as passionate as if fed by envy and privation. She had stood one morning not a fortnight since on a corner of the Rue de Rivoli and watched carriage after carriage,

automobile after automobile roll round the corner of the Place de la Concord, each framing women in the extravagant uniform of fashion — American women, all come from across the sea for one purpose only, the purpose for which they lived their useless, idle lives—more clothes. For this they spent two wretched weeks on the ocean every year —the ship's doctor had told Catalina that the pampered American was the most unheroic sailor on the Atlantic — and they looked unnormal, exotic, mere shining butterflies whose necks would be twisted with one turn of a strong wrist in the first week of a revolution; a revolution of which, unindividual as they were, they would be a precipitating cause. But here there was no exotic class, none but legitimate causes of separation from the masses; it was the charming faces one noted, the lively expression of pleasure in mere living; the garments might be Parisian, but, being less than the woman, and worn without consciousness, they barely arrested the eye, and were no part of the picture, as was the mantilla or the rebosa.

Catalina for once hated no one in the world, and even became oblivious of the grip on her arm. She looked about her with the wide, curious eyes of youth. Few gave her more than a passing glance, for her stiff hat threw an ugly shadow on her face and every line of her figure was hidden under her loose coat. But she noted that Lydia, who in the evening wore a small hat perched coquettishly on her fluffy hair, was receiving audible admiration. Suddenly she glanced out of the corner of her eye at Jane, but that severe virgin was staring moodily at the ground; her head ached and she longed for bed. Mr. Moulton, doing his best to be interested and stifle his yawns, was glancing in every direction but his immediate right, and consequently no one but his pretty daughter, and finally Catalina, noticed the handsome young Spaniard who had established communication with the blue eyes of the north. Finally the youth whispered something in which only the word *adorado* was intelligible to Lydia, who clung to her father's arm with a charming scowl.

"Don't be frightened," whispered Catalina.

"They don't mean anything — not like Frenchmen."

Not only was the crowd so great that many a flirtation passed unnoticed, but heretofore Catalina had not observed that the cavalier was companioned. When he whispered to Lydia, however, she saw a man beside him frown and take his arm as if to draw him away, but when she reassured the coquette, this man turned suddenly, his brows still knit but relaxing with a flash of amusement. Then Catalina took note of him and saw that he was not a Spaniard, although nearly as dark as Lydia's conquest. He was an Englishman, she made sure by his expression, so subtly different from that of the American. He might have been an officer, from his carriage, and he was extremely thin and walked slowly, rather than sauntered, as if the effort were distasteful or painful. His thin, well-bred face looked as if it recently might have been emaciated, but its pervading expression was humorous indifference, and his eyes had almost danced as they met hers. He did not look at her a second time, evidently seeing no profit in the

idle flirtations that delighted his neighbors, and Catalina, a trifle piqued, watched him covertly, and decided that he was a nobleman, had been in the Boer War, was doubtless covered with scars and medals.

V

HE did not haunt her dreams, however, and she had quite forgotten him as she watched the sunrise next morning from the long ridge of the Montjuich. Her cabman was refreshing himself elsewhere and she had given herself up to one of the keenest delights known to the imaginative and ungregarious mind, the solitary contemplation of nature. She watched the great, dusky plains and the jagged whiteness of Montseny's lofty crest turn yellow. Spain is one of those rare, dry countries where the very air changes color. The whole valley seemed to fill slowly with a golden mist, the snow on the great peak and on the Pyrenees beyond glittered like the fabled sands, and even the villas clinging to the steep mountain-side, the palaces in their groves of palm-

trees and citron, orange, and pomegranate, all seemed to move and sway as in the depths of shimmering tides. Catalina had the gift to see color in atmosphere as apart from the radiance that falls on sky and mountain, a gift which is said to belong only to people so highly civilized as to be on the point of degeneration. Catalina, with her robust youth and brain, was well on the hither side of degeneration, but in her lonely life and dislike of humankind she had cultivated her natural appreciation of beauty until it had not only developed her perceptions to acuteness but empowered them, when enchanted, to rise high above the ego.

She stood with her head thrown back, her mouth half open as if to quaff deeply of that golden draught, fancying that just beyond her vision lay all cosmos waiting to reveal itself and the mystery of the eternal. When she heard herself accosted she was bewildered for a moment, not realizing that she was actually in the world of the living.

"You will ruin your eyes, Miss Shore," a calm but genial voice had said. "The scene is worth it, but—"

"How dare you speak to me!" cried Catalina, furiously. She advanced swiftly, willing to strike him, not in the least mollified to recognize the Englishman upon whom she had bestowed her infrequent approval the night before.

His eye lit with interest and a pardonable surprise. But he continued, imperturbably: "Of course, I should not have been so rude as to speak to you if I hadn't happened to know Mr. Moulton rather well. I had a talk with him last night in the hotel and he was good enough to tell me your name."

"How on earth did you ever know Cousin Lyman?" She forgot her anger. "You are an Englishman, and I am sure Cousin Lyman—" She stopped awkwardly, too loyal to continue, but her eyes were large with curiosity. Where could Lyman T. Moulton have known this Englishman with his unmistakable air of that small class for whose common sins society has no punishment? "He usually knows only literary people," she continued, lamely.

"And you are sure I am not!" His laugh was abrupt, but as good-natured as his voice.

"You are quite right. I can't even write a decent letter. But literary men often belong to good clubs, you know, and one of the most distinguished of our authors happened to bring Mr. Moulton to one of mine. He was over some years ago."

"Oh, I remember." She also recalled the curious boyish pleasure which illumined Mr. Moulton's face whenever he alluded to this visit to England. It had been his one vacation from his family in thirty years.

"What is your name?" demanded Catalina, with an abruptness not unlike his own, but unmodified by his careless good-humor.

"Over." Then, as she still looked expectant, "Captain James Brassy Over, if it interests you."

"Oh!" She was childishly disappointed that he was not a lord, never having consciously seen one, then was gratified at her perspicacity of the night before.

"How have I disappointed you?"

"Disappointed me?" Her eyes flashed again. "All men are disappointing and are generally idiots, but I could not be disap-

pointed in a person to whom I had never given a thought."

"Oh!" he said, blankly. He was not offended, but was uncertain whether she were affected or merely a badly brought up child. Belonging to that order of men who have something better to do than to understand women, he decided to let her remark pass and await developments.

"I'm rather keen on Mr. Moulton," he announced, "and have half a mind to join your party. I was going to cut across to Madrid, but he says you have made out rather a jolly trip down the coast and then in to Granada."

"But we are travelling third class," she stammered, with the first prompting of snobbery she had ever known. "We—we thought it would be such an experience."

"So Mr. Moulton told me. I always travel third."

"You? Why?"

"Poverty," he said, cheerfully.

Catalina was furious with herself, the more so as she had descended to the level of her cousins, whom she secretly despised

as snobs. She did not know how to extricate herself from the position she had assumed, and answered, lamely:

"Poverty? You don't look poor."

"Only my debts keep me from being a pauper."

"And you don't mind travelling third?"

"Mind? It's comfortable enough; as comfortable as sleeping on the ground."

Catalina's face illumined. For the first time it occurred to him that she might be pretty. She forgot the awkward subject, and asked, eagerly:

"Were you in the Boer War?"

"Yes."

"All through it?"

"Pretty well."

"Do tell me about it. I never before met any one who had been in the Boer War, and it interested me tremendously."

"There's nothing to tell but what you must have read in the papers."

"I suppose that is an affectation of modesty."

"Not at all. Nothing is so common-

place as war. There is nothing in it to make conversation about."

"But you lost such a dreadful number of officers!"

"We had plenty to spare—could have got along better with less."

His cheerfulness was certainly unaffected. The two pairs of dark eyes watched each other narrowly, his keen and amused, hers with their stolid surface and slumbering fires.

"But you were wounded!" she said, triumphantly.

"Never was hit in my life."

"But you have been ill!"

"Oh, ill, fast enough—rheumatism."

Her eyes softened. "Ah, sleeping on the damp ground!"

"No. Drink."

For a moment the sullen fires in Catalina boiled high, then her eyes caught the sparkle in his and she burst into a ringing peal of laughter. She laughed rarely, and when she did her whole being vibrated to the buoyancy of youth.

"Well," she said, gayly, "I hope you

have reformed. The Moultons are temperance—rabid—and I had rheumatism once from camping out. I had to set my teeth for a week. Then I went to a sulphur spring and cured it. But I am hungry. Isn't there a restaurant here, somewhere?"

"I was about to suggest a visit to the Café Miramar. It is only a step from here."

A few minutes later they sat at a little table on the terrace, and while Captain Over ordered the coffee and rolls Catalina forgot him and stared out over the vast blue sparkle of the Mediterranean. Above, the air had drifted from gold to pink—a soft, vague pink, stealing away before the mounting sun. She had pushed back her hat and coat, and the soft collar of her blouse showed a youthful column upon which her head was proudly set. She wore no hair on her fine, open brow, but the knot at the base of the neck was rich in color. Her complexion, without red to break its magnolia tint, was flawless even in that searching light. Her beautiful eyes were vacant for the moment, and her nose, while delicate, was unclassical, her cheek-bones high; but it was her mouth

that arrested Over's gaze as the most singular feature he had ever seen. Childishly red, it was deftly cut, and resembled—what was it? A bow? Certainly not a Cupid's bow, for that was full and pouting. Then he recalled the Indian bows in the armory at home. That was it — the bow of an Indian bent sharply in the middle, so sharply that it was really two half-bows the mouth resembled, and absolutely perfect in its drawing, in the tapering sweep of its corners. A perfect mouth is a feature one may read of for a lifetime and never see, however many mouths there be that charm and invite. Pretty mouths are abundant enough, and mouths that indicate lofty or delightful characteristics, but rarely is the mouth seen for which nature has done all that she so generously does for eyes and profile. But for Catalina she had cut a mouth so exquisite that its first effect was of something uncanny, as of an unknown race, and it further held the attention as indicating absolutely nothing of the character behind.

Catalina dazedly removed her eyes from the sea and met Over's.

"Stop staring at me," she said, with a frown.

He was about to retort that she had been made to be stared at, but it occurred to him in time that he understood her too little to invite her into the airy region of compliment. He had known girls to resent them before, and they were not in his line anyway. He merely replied: "Here comes the coffee. I promise you to give it my undivided attention."

They sat silent for a few moments, keenly appreciating their little repast. Coffee always went to Catalina's head, and when she had finished she felt happy and full of good-fellowship.

"I like you immensely, and hope you'll come with us," she announced. "I'm rather sorry you are not a lord, though. I've never seen one."

"Well, I have a cousin who is one, and if you like to come to England I'll show him to you. He's rather an ass, though, and you'll probably guy him."

"You are not very respectful to the head of your house."

"Oh, he was my fag at school—he's two years younger than I am."

"Is he in the House of Peers?"

"Good Lord, no! That is, he has his seat, of course, but I doubt if he'd recognize Westminster in a photograph. Gayety girls are his lay. We married him young, though, and assured the succession."

"Is he a typical lord?"

"What's that? We have all sorts, like any other class. I might as well ask you if you were a typical American."

"Well, I'm not!" cried Catalina, with lightning in her eyes. "If nature had made me a type I'd have made myself over. It makes me hate nearly everybody, but, at least, I love to be alone, and I can always get that when I want it. I've got a big ranch—fifty thousand acres—and after my mother died, two years ago I lived on it alone, never speaking to a soul but my men of business and the servants. That's my idea of bliss, and the moment I strike the American shore I'm going back."

He looked at her with increasing interest —a girl of silences who loved nature and

hated man. But he merely said, with his quick smile: "You are a very grand young person indeed. Somerton—my cousin—has only thirty thousand acres. Of course, he's beastly poor—has so much to keep up. I suppose a ranch of that size is pure luxury, and blossoms like the rose."

"Much you know about it. I often have all I can do to make both ends meet. Droughts kill off my cattle and sheep and dry up everything that grows. My Mexicans and Indians are an idle, worthless lot, but sentiment prevents me from turning them off — their grandparents worked on the ranch. It makes me independent, of course, but I really am what is called land poor. I'm thinking of dividing a part of it into farms and selling them, and also of selling some property I have on Santa Catalina, which has become fashionable. Then I should be quite rich. Mother could get work out of anybody, but I am not nearly so energetic, and they know it. But I am so happy when I am there, and need so little money for myself that I haven't thought about it heretofore. Be-

ing over here has taught me the value of money, and I want to come back to Europe before long. Then I'll come alone and stay several years. There is so much to learn, and I find I know next to nothing. Well, let us go. As long as I am with the Moultons I suppose I must consider them, and they probably think I have been kidnapped. Who was that youth you were walking with last night?"

"The Marquis Zuñiga. I met him at the club and we strolled out together. I introduced him to Mr. Moulton and he will call this afternoon — is quite bowled over by your golden-haired cousin. I suppose we can drive back together? It would look rather absurd, wouldn't it, going down in a procession of two?"

VI

HEY were to have remained in Barcelona a week, but Mr. Moulton, alarmed at the impassioned devotion of Zuñiga to Lydia, decided to leave on the morning of the fourth day.

"That will be just six hours before Zuñiga is up, so you need not worry about giving him the slip," said Captain Over, who thought that Lydia would be well out of the young Spaniard's way. "If Miss Shore will join me in the morning we can do the shopping for the family. She speaks Spanish, and I have done this sort of thing before."

Mr. Moulton, who looked upon Over as his personal conquest, and, despite his good looks, never thought of him in the light of a marrying man, gave his message to Catalina,

and pattered down the hall to break the news to his family. He was nervous but determined. Mrs. Moulton had seen all of Barcelona that was necessary for retrospect and conversation. Jane immediately began to pack her portmanteau. Lydia shot him a glance of reproach, flushed, and turned away.

"I won't have any decadent Spaniards philandering round my daughters," said Mr. Moulton, firmly. "If you were going to marry a Spaniard I had rather it were a peasant, for they, at least, are the hope of the country. This young Zuñiga hasn't an idea in his head beyond flirting and horse-racing. He has no education and no principles."

"I've talked with him more than you have," said Lydia, with spirit, "and I think him lovely!"

"Lovely? What a term to apply to any man, let alone a dissipated Spaniard! Have I not begged you, my love, to choose your adjectives — one of the first principles of style?"

"I don't write," retorted Lydia, who was

in a very naughty mood. "I have no use for style."

"I should never be surprised to see your name in our best magazines," said Mr. Moulton, with his infinite tact. "Make this young man the hero of a story if you like. A clever Englishwoman I met yesterday, and who has lived in Spain for many years, told me that the Spanish youth is the brightest in the world, but that when he reaches the age of fourteen his brain closes up like the shell of an oyster and never opens again; the reason is that at that age he takes to immoderate smoking and various other forms of dissipation, the brain from that time on receiving neither nourishment nor encouragement. I intend to write an essay on the subject. It is most interesting. And I thought out a splendid phrase this afternoon. I'll write it down this moment before I forget it." He whipped out his note-book. "'The only hope for Spain lies in the abolishment of bull-fights, beggars, and churches.' First of all there must be a revolution in which the most worthless aristocracy in Europe will disappear forever.

I would not have them beheaded, but driven out. Now, pack before you go to bed, my love, for we must be up bright and early—we have not seen the cathedral. Shall I help you?"

Jane had finished. Lydia sulkily declined his assistance. He kissed them both, and went off to his nightly jottings and to pack the conjugal portmanteau.

Lydia continued to brush out her golden locks and to frown at her mirror. She longed for sympathy and a confidant, but knew that Jane would agree with her father, and recalled that Catalina had barely taken note of Zuñiga's existence.

"But if he has any sand," she informed herself, "he will follow me up. And I'll marry whom I please—so there!"

The next morning, having seen the rest of the party off to the cathedral, Catalina and Captain Over started down the Rambla Centro in high good-humor; they shared the exhilaration of moving on, and enjoyed the novelty of the new housekeeping. They packed a hamper with cold ham and roast

chicken, cake, and two loaves of bread. Then Catalina bought recklessly in a confectioner's and Captain Over visited a coffee-shop. When they had filled the front seat of their cab, Catalina, after a half-hour of sharp bargaining, bought a white lace mantilla and a fine old fan.

"These are two of the things I came to Spain for," she announced to the bewildered Englishman, who had shopped with women before, but never with a woman who was definite, concentrated, driving hard in a straight line. As they went out with the precious bundle he ventured his first remark.

"I had an idea you were indifferent to dress."

"I am and I am not. I had rather be comfortable most of the time, and I hate being stared at, but when I dress I dress. I may never wear this mantilla, but it is a thing of beauty to possess and look at."

"I hope you will wear it, and here in Spain. Are you part Spanish, by-the-way?"

"No, Indian."

"Indian?" He looked at her with renewed interest. "Do you mind?"

"No, I don't. It's a good excuse for a whole lot of things."

"Ah, I see. Well, it certainly makes you different from other people. You like that and you may believe it."

Lydia was profoundly thankful to leave Barcelona while her marquis still slumbered; she was too young and curious not to be glad to travel on any terms, but to say farewell in a third-class carriage to a member of an ancient aristocracy was quite another matter. She accounted for Captain Over's willingness to travel humbly by the supposition that he was in love with Catalina, and did not believe for a moment that it was his habit.

But Captain Over was not in love with Catalina. He was still half an invalid, and constitutionally indolent, as are most men who are immediately attractive to women. She interested and amused him, was a good comrade when in a good-humor, and as full of pluck and resource as a boy. He liked all the family, including Jane, who was charmed with him, and enjoyed Mr. Moul-

ton's many good stories. It was a pleasant party and he was glad to join it, but if he had been summoned hastily back to England, or been sure that when the journey was over he should never see these agreeable companions again, he would have accepted the decree with the philosophy of one who had met many delightful people in many country-houses and sat by many delightful women at many London dinners, whose very names he might forget before he saw them again. It was a part of his charm that he appeared to live so wholly in the present, without retrospect or anticipation, and Catalina concluded it was the result of being a soldier, whose time was not his own, and who was ready and willing to accept the end of all things at any moment.

The cool, open car in which they moved out of Barcelona had an aisle down the middle and was new and highly varnished. Even Jane condescended to remark that in hot weather in a dusty country such accommodations were preferable to upholstered seats which, doubtless, were not brushed

once a month. Then she retired to her Pater, and the rest of the party hung out of the windows and gazed at the tremendous ridge of Montserrat cutting the blue sky like a thousand twisted fingers petrified in their death-throes. It is the most jagged mass of rock in Europe; Nature would seem to have spat it out through gnashing teeth; and surely no spot more terrifying even to the gods could have been selected for the safe-keeping of the holy grail.

Then once more the train ambled through vineyards and silver olive groves, past old brown castles on their rocky heights, glimpses of Roman roads and ruins, the innumerable tunnels making the brown plains more dazzling, the sea in glimpses like a chain of peacock's feathers.

To-day for the greater part of the trip their companions were a large party of washing-women, brawny, with shining, pleasant faces. They wore blue cotton frocks and white handkerchiefs pinned about their slippery heads. On the capacious lap of each was a basket of white clothes. They gossiped volubly and paid no attention to

the Americans, who, indeed, in a short time, were so dusty that the varnish of civilization was obliterated.

They were a gay party. As the day's trip was to be short, Mrs. Moulton concluded not to feel tired, and while they were in the tunnels Captain Over made her a cup of tea under the seat, regardless of the Guardia Civile who were honoring the carriage with their presence. These personages looked very sturdy and self-confident in their smart uniforms, and quite capable of handling the always possible bandit. Catalina audibly invoked him. She was possessed by that exhilaration which a woman feels when in the companionship of a new and interesting man with whom she is not in love. The great passion induces an illogical depression of spirits, melancholy forebodings, and extremes of sentimentalism, which are the death of high spirits and humor. Catalina had some inkling of this, having experienced one or two brief and silent attacks of misplaced affection, and rejoiced in the spontaneous and mutual friendship. Outwardly she looked as solemn as usual,

but, perhaps, even hidden sunshine may warm, for on no day since they left Lyons had the party been so independent of material ills. Even Lydia came forth from the sulky aloofness of the morning, and Jane laid Pater to rest, when, after the excellent luncheon, Catalina produced a large box of bonbons.

By this time there was no one in the car but the Guardia Civile and a young peasant, a brawny, handsome Catalan, who might have been the village blacksmith and a possible leader in the anarchy of his province. He had the haughty, independent manner of his class, and, although his eye was fiery and reckless, the lower part of his face symbolized power and self-control.

Lydia, having carefully washed the dust from her face, in a spirit of mischief and breathless in her first open act of mutiny, left her seat abruptly and offered the box of sweets first to the military escort, who arose and declined with a profound bow, then to the young peasant. She had stood before the guards with downcast eyes, but when the peasant turned to her she deliber-

ately lifted her long brown eyelashes, and the blue shallows sparkling with coquetry met a wild and eager flash never encountered before. A blue silk handkerchief was knotted loosely about her dishevelled golden head, she wore a blue soft cotton blouse, and her cheeks were pink. Dainty and sweet and gracious, what wonder that she dazzled the rustic accustomed to maidens as swarthy as himself?

"Madre de Dios!" he muttered.

"A dulce, señor?" said Lydia, with the charming hesitation of the imperfect linguist.

Then the peasant rose, and with the grace and courtesy of a grandee possessed himself of a bonbon. But he did not know, perhaps, that it was intended to go the road of black bread and garlic, for he fumbled in the pocket of his blouse, brought forth an envelope, rolled up the sweetmeat, and tenderly secreted it. Lydia gave him a radiant smile, shook her head, and still held out the box.

"Eat one," she said; and as the man only stared at her with deepening color, she

put one of the bonbons into her own mouth and motioned to him to follow suit. This time he obeyed her, and for the moment they had the appearance, and perhaps the sensation, of breaking bread together.

"Dios de mi alma!" muttered the man, and then Lydia bowed to him gravely and turned slowly, reluctantly, and rejoined her panting family. Mrs. Moulton's face was scarlet; she was sitting upright; the air-cushions were in a heap on the floor. Mr. Moulton's bland visage expressed solemn indignation, an expression which he had the ability to infuse into the review of a book prudence warned him to condemn.

"Lydia Moulton!" exclaimed her mother.

"I am grieved and ashamed," said her father.

"Why?" asked Lydia, flippantly. "It is the custom in Spain to share with your travelling companions, and last night you said you had rather I married a Spanish peasant than a Spanish gentleman."

"I am ashamed of you!" repeated Mr. Moulton, with dignity. "Are you looking for a husband, may I ask? If so, we will go

direct to Gibraltar and take the first steamer for America."

Lydia colored, but she was still in a naughty mood, and, encouraged by a sympathetic flash from Catalina, she retorted:

"No, I don't want to marry, but I do want to be able to look at a man unchaperoned by the entire family. I haven't had the liberty of a convent girl since I arrived in Europe. I feel like running off with the first man that finds a chance to propose to me."

Mrs. Moulton, whose complexion during this outburst had faded to its normal gray tones, the little lines of cultivated worries and invalidism quivering on the surface, turned her pale gaze upon Catalina. She stared mutely, but volumes rolled into the serene, contemptuous orbs two seats away.

Mr. Moulton, in his way, was a rapid thinker. "My dear," he said, gently, to the revolutionist, "if we have surrounded you it has not been from distrust, but because you are far too pretty to be alone among foreigners for a moment. At home, as you know, you often receive your young

friends alone. I am sure that when you think the matter over you will regret your lapse from dignity, particularly as you have no doubt disturbed that poor young man's peace of mind."

Lydia seldom rebelled, but she had learned that when her father became diplomatic she might as well smite upon stone; so she refrained from further sarcasm, and, retreating to a seat behind the others, stared sullenly out of the window. She was not unashamed of herself, but longed, nevertheless, to meet again the fiery gaze of the Catalan—"the anarchist," she called him; it sounded far better than peasant. Zuñiga dwindled out of her memory as the poor, artificial thing he no doubt was. At last she had seen a blaze of admiration in the eyes of a real man. She was not wise enough to know that it was nothing in her meagre little personality that had roused the lightnings in a manly bosom, merely a type of prettiness made unconventional by the setting and the man. But the impression was made, and had she dared she would have sent an occasional demure glance towards

the young peasant behind her; as it was she adjusted her charming profile for his delectation.

They entered the long tunnel which the train traverses before skirting the bluffs of Tarragona. Spain does not light its railway carriages before dark. Lydia had thrown her arm along the seat. Suddenly she became aware that some one, as lithe and noiseless as a cat, had entered the seat behind her. She was smitten with sudden terror, and held her breath. A second later a pair of young and ardent lips passed as lightly as a passing flame along her rigid hand.

"Dueño adorado!" The voice was almost at her ear. Then she knew that the seat was empty again. Her first impulse had been to cry out; she was terrified and furious. But she had a quick vision of a mêlée of knives and pistols, the Guardia Civile and peasant, reinforcements from the next car, and the death of all her party. It was the imaginative feat of her life, and as the train ran out of the tunnel she congratulated herself warmly and put on her hat as indif-

ferently as Jane, who had never known the kiss of man. She swept past her admirer with her head high and her lids—with their curling lashes—low.

VII

"AH!" exclaimed Captain Over, "this is Spain! Who is going to sit with me in front?"

Catalina made no reply, but she ran swiftly to the big, canvas-covered diligence, climbed over the high wheel before Over could follow to assist her, and seated herself beside the driver with the most ingratiating manner that any of her party had seen her assume. Over placed himself beside her, the others took possession of the rear, the driver cracked his whip, and the six mules, jingling with half a hundred bells, leaped down the dusty road towards the steep and rocky heights where Tarragona has defied the nations of the earth. Then it was that Over laughed softly, and the innocent Moultons learned what depths of iniquity may lie at the base

of a ranch-girl's blandishments. As they reached the foot of the bluff the delighted youth who was answerable to Heaven for his precious freight abandoned the reins. Catalina gathered them in one hand, half rose from her seat, and with a great flourish cracked the long whip, not once, but thrice, delivering herself of sharp, peremptory cries in Spanish. The mules needed no further encouragement. They tore up the steep and winding road, whisked round curves, strained every muscle to show what a Spanish mule could do. They even shook their heads and tossed them in the air that their bells might jingle the louder. Mrs. Moulton and Jane screamed, clinging to each other, the portmanteaus bounced to the floor, and Mr. Moulton would have grasped Catalina's arm but Over intercepted and reassured him. And, indeed, there were few better whips than Catalina in a state notorious for a century of reckless and brilliant driving. She drove like a cowboy, not like an Englishwoman, Over commented, but he felt the exhilaration of it, even when the unwieldy diligence bounded

from side to side in the narrow road and the dust enveloped them. In a moment he shifted his eyes to her face. Her white teeth were gleaming through the half-open bow of her mouth, tense but smiling, and her splendid eyes were flashing, not only with the pleasure of the born horsewoman, but with a wicked delight in the consternation behind her. She looked, despite the mules and the dusty old diligence, like a goddess in a chariot of victory, and Over, who rarely imagined, half expected to see fire whirling in the clouds of dust about the wheels.

As they reached the top of the bluff the driver indicated the way, and they flew down the Rambla San Carlos, past the astounded soldiers lounging in front of the barracks, and stopped with a grand flourish in front of the hotel.

Catalina turned to Over, her lips still parted, her eyes glittering.

"That is the first time I have been really happy since I left home," she announced, ignoring her precipitately descending relatives. "I feel young again, and I've felt

as old as the hills ever since I've been in Europe. I'll like you forever because you approve of me, and I haven't seen that expression on anybody's face for months."

"Oh, I approve of you!" said the Englishman, laughing.

They descended, and she challenged him to race her to the parapet that they might limber themselves. He accepted, and, in spite of her undepleted youth, he managed to beat by means of a superior length of limb. The victory filled him with a quite unreasoning sense of exultation, and as they hung over the parapet and looked out upon the liquid turquoise of the sea, sparkling under a cloudless sky, its little white sailboats dancing along with the pure joy of motion, he felt younger and happier than he had since his cricket days.

"I think we had better not go to the hotel for a time," he suggested. "I am afraid that Mr. and Mrs. Moulton are in a bit of a wax. Perhaps after they have rested and freshened up they will forgive you, and meanwhile we can explore."

So they wandered off to the old town until

they stood at the foot of a flight of ancient stone steps, wider than three streets, that led up to the plaza before the cathedral. Crouching in the shallow corners of the stair were black-robed old crones who looked as if they might have begged of Cæsar. Passing up and down, or in and out of the narrow streets, to right and left were young women of languid and insolent carriage, in bright cotton frocks and yellow kerchiefs about their heads, young men in small clothes and wide hats, loafing along as if all time were in their little day, and troops and swarms of children. These attached themselves to the strangers, encouraged by the caressing Spanish words of the girl, followed them through the cathedral, and out into a side street, chattering like magpies.

"You look like a comet with a long tail," said Over. "I'll scatter them with a few coppers." He paused as she turned her head over her shoulder and regarded him with a wondering reproach. For the moment her large brown eyes looked bovine. "Do you want these little demons to fol-

low us all over the place?" he asked, curiously.

"Why not?"

"Tarragona is theirs," said Over, lightly. "They would annoy most women." He hoped to provoke her to further revelation, but she made no reply, and they rambled with occasional speech through the ancient narrow streets, followed by their noisy retinue, the little Murillo faces sparkling with curiosity and foresight of illimitable wealth in coppers.

But even Catalina forgot them at times, as she and her companion stopped to decipher the Roman inscription on the foundation blocks of many of the houses. Although the houses themselves may have been younger than the huge blocks with their legends of the Scipios and the Cæsars, they were old enough, and the steep and winding streets, with the women hanging out of the high windows and sitting before the doors, all bits of color against the mellow stone, were no doubt much the same in effect as when Augustus and his hosts marched by with eagles aloft.

Catalina, who had the historic sense highly developed and had found her happiness in the past, infected Over with her enthusiasm, and he followed her without protest to the outskirts of the town, and looked down over the great valley beneath the heights of Tarragona, then up past the Cyclopean walls, those stupendous, unhewn blocks of masonry which still, for a sweep of two miles or more, surround the old town.

"What a place to hide from the world!" said Catalina. They had turned into a little street just within the wall, and seated themselves on an odd block to rest, their exhausted retinue camping all the way along the line. Opposite them was a high and narrow house, its upper balcony full of flowers, and an arcade behind suggesting the dim quiet of patio with its palms and fountain, its shadows haunted with incommunicable memories of an ancient past. "The new town we drove through with its fine houses is too commonplace; but this — any one of these eyries—what a nest! I could live quite happy up there, couldn't you?"

"For a time." He was too frankly mod-

ern to yield unconditionally. "But I must confess I can't think what artists are about."

When they reached the plaza Catalina turned to the children and solemnly thanked them for the great pleasure and service they had rendered two belated strangers. They accepted the tribute in perfect good faith and then scrambled for the coppers.

VIII

VER and Catalina walked hastily to the hotel; they had but half an hour in which to make themselves presentable for dinner. Preparation for this function, however, was not elaborate. A tub and a change of shirt and blouse was all that could be expected of weary tourists travelling with one portmanteau each; their trunks were not to leave the stations until they reached Granada. Catalina invariably appeared in her hat, ready to go out again the moment the meal was over if she could induce Mr. Moulton to take her. To-night the others sat down to their excellent repast in the cool dining-room without her. Mrs. Moulton and Jane were disposed to treat Over with hauteur, but thawed after the soup and fish. Mr. Moulton had long

since recovered his serenity and expressed regret that he had not accompanied the more enterprising members of the party. Only Lydia, who had put on her prettiest blouse and fluffed her hair anew, was interested in neither dinner nor Tarragona.

"Off your feed?" Over was asking, sympathetically, when Mrs. Moulton, who was helping herself to the roast, dropped the fork on her plate. The others followed the direction of her astonished eyes and beheld Catalina — but not the Catalina of their habit. Hers was the largest of the portmanteaus, and it was evident that she had excavated it at last. Gone were the stiff, short skirt and ill-fitting blouse, the drooping hat and shapeless coat. She wore a girlish gown of white nun's-veiling, made with a masterly simplicity that revealed her figure in all its long grace, its gentle curves, and supple power of endurance. Only the round throat and forearms were revealed, but the lace about them and the calm stateliness of her carriage produced the impression of full dress. Her mass of waving chestnut hair, with a sheen of gold like a web on its surface,

was parted and brushed back from her oval face into a heavy knot at the base of the head. Around her throat she wore a string of pearls, and falling from her shoulders a crimson scarf.

She walked down the long room with a perfect simulation of unconsciousness, except for the lofty carriage of her head, which concealed much inward trepidation. Her broad brow was as bland as a child's, and her eyes wore what an admirer had once called her "wondering look." Never had her remarkable mouth looked so like a bow, the bow of her Indian ancestors. A beauty she was at last, fulfilling the uneasy prediction of her relatives. The few other people in the dining-room stared, and Captain Over, who had risen, stared at her hard.

"Ripping! Ripping!" he thought. Then, with a shock of personal pride: "She no longer looks like a cow-boy. She might be on her way to court."

It was characteristic of Catalina that she did not even sink into her seat with one of those airy remarks with which woman

demonstrates her ease in unusual circumstances. She made no remark whatever, but helped herself to the roast and fell to with a hearty appetite. Neither did she send a flash of coquetry to Captain Over; and he, with an odd sense that in her incongruity, and the hostility aroused in two of the party, she stood in need of a protector, began talking much faster than was his wont, and even condescended to tell Mr. Moulton an anecdote of the late campaign. Having gone so far he hardly could retreat, and indeed his reluctance seemed finally to be overcome. Very soon the company had forgotten Catalina, and Catalina came forth from herself and hung upon his words. Given her own way she would have been a man and a soldier, and like all normal women she exalted heroism to the head of the manly virtues. Over told no stories wherein he was the hero, but unwittingly he unrolled a panorama of infinite possibilities for the brave race of whose best he was a type. At all events, he made himself extremely interesting, and when he was finally left to Mr. Moulton and cigars, Cata-

lina walked blindly out of the front door of the hotel, reinvoking the pictures that had stimulated her imagination. She was recalled by the pressure of a small but bony hand on her bare arm. She turned to meet the cold, blue gaze of Mrs. Moulton. That gentlewoman was very erect and very formal.

"You cannot go out alone!" she said, with disgust in her voice. "I am surprised to be forced to remind you that this is not—California. It would be impossible in your travelling costume, but dressed as for an evening's entertainment in a private house you would be insulted at once. As long as you travel with us I must insist that you give as little trouble as possible."

If she hoped for war, feeling herself for once secure, she was disappointed. Catalina merely shrugged her shoulders and, re-entering the hall, ascended the stair. She recalled that her room opened upon a balcony, which would answer her purpose.

The balcony hung above a garden overflowing with flowers, surrounded on three sides by the hotel and its low outbuildings, and secluded from the sloping street by a

high wall. She paced up and down watching the servants under the veranda washing their dishes. They all wore a bit of the bright color beloved of the Iberian, and they made a great deal of noise. Suddenly Lydia took possession of her arm and related the adventure of the afternoon.

"Is it not dreadful?" she concluded. "A peasant! But to save my life I cannot be as furious as I should—nor help thinking of it. I feel like one of those princesses in the fairy tales beloved of the poor but wonderful youth."

"It is highly romantic," replied Catalina, dryly. "The setting was not all that it might have been, and I have seen too many picturesque vaqueros all my life to be deeply impressed by a handsome peasant in a blouse; but I suppose any romance is better than none in this Old World."

She felt vaguely alarmed, and half a generation older than this silly little cousin whose suburban experience made her peculiarly susceptible to any semblance of romance in Europe; but as Lydia, repelled in her girlish confidence, drew stiffly away

from her, Catalina relented with a gush of feminine sympathy.

"I really mean that a bit of romance like that makes life more endurable," she asserted. "And you may be sure that your marquis would not have been so delicate. I wonder who he is! He certainly is a personage in his way. Of course, you'll never see him again, but it will be something to think about when you are married to an author and correcting his type-written manuscripts!"

Lydia, mollified, laughed merrily. "I'm never going to marry any old author. Let the recording angel take note of that. I'm sick of mutual admiration societies—and all the rest of it. If I can't do any better I'll manage to marry some enterprising young business man and help him to grow rich."

Catalina, who had had her own way all her life, nevertheless appreciated the colorless shallows in which her cousin had splashed of late in the vain attempt to reach a shore, and replied, sympathetically:

"Come back to California when I go and live on my ranch for a while. Out-of-doors is what you want; a far-away horizon is as

good for the soul as for the eyes. And you'll get enough of the picturesque and all the liberty you can carry—"

She paused abruptly and Lydia caught her breath. In the street below was the sound of a guitar, then of a man's impassioned voice.

The girls stole to the edge of the balcony and looked over. There was no moon, and the vines were close. The street was thick with shadows, but they could see the lithe, active figure of a man clad in velvet jacket and smallclothes. His head was flung back and his quick, rich notes seemed to leap to the balcony above. Catalina had forgotten that her candles still burned. Their rays fell directly on the girls. The man saw them and his voice burst forth in such peremptory volume, ringing against the walls of the narrow street, that heads began to appear at many windows.

"It is that peasant we saw on the train to-day," said Over's amused voice behind the girls. "He was in the café a moment ago and is got up in full peasant finery. You made a conquest, Miss Lydia."

Catalina felt her companion give an ecstatic shiver, but omitted to pull her back as she leaned recklessly over the rail. Her own spirit seemed to swirl in that glorious tide. She threw back her head, staring at the black velvet skies of Spain with their golden music, then turned slowly and regarded the old white walls and gardens about her, the palms and the riot of flowers and vine, invoking the image of Cæsar himself prowling in the night to the lattice of inviting loveliness in a mantilla. She wished she had draped her own about her head, and wondered if Over shared her vision.

But he was merely marvelling at her beauty, and wondering if he should ever get as far as California. He would like to see her in that patio she had described to him, with its old mission fountain, its gigantic date-palms through whose bending branches the sun never penetrated, the big-leaved banana-tree heavy with yellow fruit, the scarlet hammock, the mountains rising just behind the old house. She had described it to him only that afternoon, and he had received a vivid impression of it all,

and of the deep verandas and the cool, austere rooms within. It had struck him as a delightful retreat after the strife of the world, and he wondered if under that eternally blue sky, in that Southern land of warmth and color, where the very air caressed, he could not forget even the broad demesne of his ancestors, a demesne that would never be his, but where he was always a welcome guest. She had told him that her estate—her "ranch"—went right down to the sea; it was, in fact, a wide valley, closed with the Pacific at one end, and a range of mountains immediately behind the house. It had seemed to him the ideal existence as she described it, a perfect balance of the intellectual and the out-door life, of boundless freedom and unvarying health; and all in an atmosphere of perfect peace. He had envied her at the moment, but had philosophically concluded that in the long run a man's club most nearly filled the bill. He fancied, however, that he should correspond with her, and one of these days pay her a visit.

"Best remember that this is the land of

passion, not of idle flirtation, Miss Lydia," he said, warningly, as the music ceased for a moment. "What is play to you might be death to that Johnny down there."

For answer Lydia plucked a rose and dropped it into a lithe brown hand that shot up to meet it.

IX

CATALINA threw on her dressing-gown and leaned far out of her window. The very air felt as if it had been drenched by the golden shower of the morning sun, and so clear it was, it glittered like the sea. Across the narrow way was a stately white house, doubtless the "palace" of a rich man, and behind it, high above the street, was a beautiful garden, at whose very end, in an angle of the stone wall, stood a palm-tree. Beyond that palm-tree, so delicate and graceful in its peculiar stiffness, was a glimpse of blue water. Far below was a cross street in which no one moved as yet, and beside her were the balcony and garden of the hotel and the vines hanging over the wall.

Catalina sang, in the pure joy of being

alive, a snatch of one of the Spanish songs still to be heard in Southern California.

"Buenas dias, señorita," broke in a low and cautious voice, and Catalina, turning with a start and frown, saw that Captain Over was looking round the corner of the balcony.

"If you will come out here," he continued, "I will make you a cup of coffee, and then we can go for a walk."

Catalina nodded amiably, and, hastily dressing herself, opened her long window and joined him. He had brought his travelling-lamp and coffee-pot, and the water was simmering. With the exception of a man who was cleaning harness in the court below, they seemed to be the only persons awake. The air was heavy laden with sweet scents, and the garden in the fresh morning light was a riot of color. The Mediterranean was murmuring seductively to the shore.

"This is heaven," sighed Catalina. "Why can't one always be free from care like this —the Moultons, to be exact. Let's you and I and Lydia run away from the rest."

"When I run away with a woman I shall not take a chaperon," said Over, coolly.

Catalina could assume the blankness of a mask, but upon repartee she never ventured. "Am I not to do any of the work?" she asked. "I am sick of being waited on. At home I often make my own breakfast before my lazy Mexicans are up, and saddle my horse. I do a great deal of work on the ranch, first and last, for I believe in work—and I didn't get the idea from Tolstoï, either. I don't like Tolstoï," she added, defiantly. "He's one of those gigantic fakes the world always believes in."

"Well, I've never read a line of Tolstoï," admitted Captain Over, who was carefully revolving his coffee-machine, "so I can't argue with you. But work! This is all the work I want."

"Don't you love work?"

"I don't."

"But you do work."

"At what?"

"Oh, in the army and all that."

"My orderly does the work."

"You are so provoking. There is all sorts of work you must do yourself."

"Well, why do you remind me of anything

so painful, when I am doing my best to forget it? You are not an altruist or a socialist, are you?"

"I'm not anything that some one else has invented. I believe in work, because idleness horrifies me; some primal instinct in me wars against it. The civilization that permits idleness in the rich and in those with just enough to relieve them from work, with none of the responsibilities and diversions of great fortunes, is no civilization at all, to my mind. Of course, I believe in progress, but I believe in hanging on to the conditions which first made progress possible; and when I saw those carriage-loads of ridiculous women and finery in Paris I wanted to go home and till the soil and restore the balance. How good that coffee smells!"

He poured her out a steaming cup. He had raided the kitchen for cream and bread, and he carried sugar with him. No orderly had ever made better coffee.

"What women?" he asked, smiling into her still angry eyes. They were seated at a little table close to the railing and the vines

hung down in her hair. Her theories might be crude and somewhat vague, but at least she thought for herself.

She described the morning in the Rue de Rivoli and the procession of American butterflies.

"What can you expect in a new republic of sudden fortunes?" he asked. "Some one must spend the money, and the men haven't time."

"Then are your women something besides nerves and clothes—your leisure women?"

"I don't wish to be rude, but they are. I am, of course, only comparing them with your idle class. I have had no chance to meet any other until now. But I have met scores of rich American women and girls in London and at country-houses, and I've come to the conclusion that what is the matter with them — aside from lack of traditions — is that their men leave them nothing to do but spend money and amuse themselves. With us rich women and poor are helpmeets, and what saves our fast set from being as empty-headed as yours is that they have grown up among men of

affairs, have heard the great questions discussed all their lives. Then, of course, they are far better educated, and often extremely clever — something more than bright and amusing. Many of them are pretty hard cases, I'm not denying that; but few are silly. They have not had the chance to be, and that is where ancestors come in, too—serious ancestors. Personally, I have never been sensible to the famous charm of the American woman, and although there are exceptions, naturally—I am only generalizing—they strike me in the mass as being shallow, selfish, egotistical, nervous. I suppose the fundamental trouble is that they have so much that an impossible ideal of happiness is the result, and they are restless and dissatisfied because they can't get it. Possibly in another generation or two they may develop the sort of brain that makes the women of the Old World well balanced and philosophical."

"Weren't you ever tempted to marry an heiress?"

"I never saw one that would look at me, so I've been spared one temptation, at least."

Catalina had finished her coffee. She leaned her chin on her hands and gazed at him reflectively. "I should think you could get one," she said, quite impersonally. "If you weren't such a practical soul you'd be almost romantic looking, and you're quite the ideal soldier, besides being a guardsman and well-born. I think if you came to Santa Barbara I could find you a rich girl. Quantities come there for the winter, and they are always delighted to be asked to a ranch."

"All women are match-makers," he said, testily. "A poor fellow I left out in South Africa got off just one epigram in his life—'There are two kinds of women, living women and dead women.' I believe he was right. Shall we go and see if they will let us into the archbishop's palace?"

X

UIEN quiere agua? Quien quiere agua?"

The shrill cries of the water-carriers smote upon grateful ears as the dusty, sun-baked train paused at Fuente, a little station on the zigzag between Valencia and Albacete. They were young, misshapen girls, the hip that supported the gourd at least three inches higher than the other, with a corresponding elevation of shoulder. All along the train, hands were waving encouragingly, accompanied by cries of "Aqui! Aqui!" and the glasses were rapidly filled and emptied. But few ran over to the *cantina* where the wine of the country was sold; and the amount of water that is dispensed at every station in Spain should encourage those whose war-cry is temperance and who are prone to believe

that the southern races are lost. But water is precious in Spain, and must be paid for. At every station old women are waiting with buckets to catch the discharge from the engine—not, it is to be hoped, for traffic.

Even the Moultons, who had exhausted Captain Over's aluminum bottle and had prejudices against uncertified water, passed out their own cups and drank thirstily. No one was in his best temper. Valencia is a dirty, noisy, ill-mannered city, and after two sleepless nights they had been forced to rise early or remain another day. Moreover, the handsome peasant had followed them with a melodious persistence that was causing Mr. Moulton serious uneasiness. It was impossible to appeal to the Guardia Civile, for the man did nothing that was not within his rights; for the matter of that the stranger in Spain is practically without rights. The man—his name, it was now known, was Jesus Maria—a name common enough in a land without humor—never even offered them the usual courtesies of travel. Nevertheless, he managed to make his presence felt in a hundred ways inde-

pendently of his voice and guitar, as well as the subtle intimation that for the stern frown on Mr. Moulton's brow he cared nothing.

"I don't wish any trouble, of course," Mr. Moulton had said to Over that morning, "but I am seriously considering the plan of continuing the journey to Granada in a first-class carriage. Lydia has already begun to suffer from the annoyance, and it is abominable that a refined, carefully brought up girl should be subjected to such an experience. The marquis was bad enough—but this! Even when her back is to him I am sure she feels his rude stare. I can assure you, Over, a pretty daughter is a great responsibility; but although I have had to dispose—diplomatically, of course—of several undesirable suitors, I never even anticipated anything like this. It is preposterous."

"The first-class idea is not bad; it would emphasize the difference between them; it is rather a puzzle to him, I fancy—he is a Spaniard, remember—that we travel in his own way and yet regard him from a superior plane."

Captain Over, as he stood with Catalina at a booth on the platform buying substantial tortillas made of eggs, meat, and potatoes, repeated the conversation. "He thinks they have never communicated in any way," he added. "What is the best thing to do? I don't fancy telling tales, but it seems to me Mr. Moulton should be warned."

"Oh, Lydia can take care of herself," said Catalina, carelessly. "She is a little flirt and quite intoxicated with what she calls an intrigue. It is the first time she has ever done any thinking for herself—you can see what Cousin Lyman is; he'd feed us if we'd let him. If we were Moultons, we'd be taking a little fling ourselves. Here she comes."

Lydia found a place beside them in the crowd that was clamoring for the old woman's hot tortillas.

"Mother says there is not enough bread," she said. "Jane is afraid of the beggars and father has disappeared, or I suppose I should not have got this far alone. Talk about the freedom of the American girl! I'd like to write a book to tell the world

how many different kinds of Americans there are."

"You can't deny that you are a spoiled child, though," said Over, banteringly, and then he scowled. The young peasant had joined the group and was quietly demanding a tortilla. He no longer wore his peasant blouse, but the gala costume he had bought or borrowed in Tarragona. He was a superb figure of a man, and every woman on the platform stared at him. He looked haughtily aloof, even from Lydia, but Over saw her hand seek her little waist-bag and suspected that a note passed.

"He certainly is a man," he said to Catalina, as they walked back to the train; "looks more of a gentleman, for that matter, than a good many we dine with. Still, it can't go on; so set your wits to work, and we'll get rid of him between us."

But for Jesus Maria the afternoon would have been delightful. They were ascending, and the air was cooler; the great plain of La Mancha was studded with windmills, and its horizon gave up the welcome and lofty ridges of the Sierra de Alcatraz. But

the cavalier—when not smoking the eternal cigarito—strummed his guitar and sang all the love-songs he knew. Mr. Moulton coughed and frowned and ordered Lydia to turn her back; but open remonstrance might have meant the flashing of knives, certainly the vociferating protest of female voices, for the car was crowded and the peasants were delighted with the concert. At Chinchilla, however, there was a diversion, and love moved rearward.

A man leaped into the train. He wore a belt of three tiers, and each tier was stuck full of knives. Mrs. Moulton screamed; but he was immediately surrounded by the peasants, who snatched at the knives and bargained shamelessly. In a moment he thrust them aside, and, making his way to the strangers, protested that he had reserved his best for them, and flourished in their faces some of the finest specimens of Albacete—long, curved blades of steel and long, curved handles of ebony or ivory inlaid with bits of colored glass and copper. Catalina and Captain Over bought several at a third of the price demanded. The Catalan

had followed the huckster, and under Mr. Moulton's very nose he bought the longest and most deadly of the collection. After several playful thrusts at the vender, and severing a lock of his hair, he thrust it conspicuously into his sash, and with a lightning glance at poor Mr. Moulton returned to his seat. Here it was evident that he related deeds of prowess; once more he flourished the knife, and his audience uttered high staccato notes of approval.

XI

THEY arrived at Albacete before nightfall. It was too small a place for the omnibus, but several enterprising boys appropriated the hand-luggage and, without awaiting instructions, made for the one hotel of the Alto. This proved to be so far superior to the hotel of the small American town that it appeared palatial to the weary travellers. It stood, large and white and cool, on the Alameda, whose double row of plane-trees formed an avenue down the middle of the long, wide street. It is true the beds were not made, water appeared to be as precious as at the stations, and the servants as weak of head as of ambulatory muscle; but the rooms were large and lofty and clean, and the supper was eatable. Mrs. Moulton and Jane, after

a brief ramble, sought what to both was become the end and aim of all travelling—bed and quiet; and Mr. Moulton, leaving the other two girls in charge of Over, soon followed their example.

"I saw that scoundrel leave the train," he murmured, as he left Over at the foot of the staircase, "but he has gone off to the diversions of the new town, no doubt, and will be occupied for a few hours at least."

The girls had wandered to the doorway and were looking out into the dark Alameda. Over exchanged a glance with Catalina and drew Lydia's hand through his arm.

"Miss Shore is tired," he said, "but I am sure you will enjoy another stroll. At all events don't leave me to moon by myself." And Lydia, flattered by the unusual attention, surrendered with her charming animation of word and feature.

They walked beside the Alameda down to the quaint old plaza, surrounded by white houses of varied architecture, deserted and dimly lit with the infrequent lamp. When Englishmen are diplomatic they are

the most subtle and sinuous of mankind, but when they are not they are the bluntest. Over said nothing whatever until he had enjoyed the half of his pipe, and then he remarked, "I say, you must drop that man —send him about his business without any more loss of time."

Lydia, who had been prattling amiably, stiffened and attempted to withdraw her arm.

"What are my affairs to you?" she asked, haughtily.

"For this trip I am your big brother. I should not merit the friendship of your father if I did not make this affair my own. Brothers are always privileged to be rude, you know: you are not only playing a silly game, but a dangerous one. That man will try to kidnap you—he is only one degree removed from a bandit." Lydia's eyes flashed, and he hastened to rectify a possible misstep. "How would you like to live in the side of a hill with your lord—to escape taxes—and cook his frijoles three hundred and sixty-five days of the year? If he didn't beat you, he certainly would not serenade you; and even in a country where

water is more plentiful than in Spain—suppose you induced him to emigrate—it is doubtful if he would ever take a bath—"

"You are a brute!"

"Merely practical. He would insist upon having his beans flavored with garlic, and he doubtless smokes all night as well as all day. He may be a good enough sort in the main, but there is no hope here for a man to rise above his station in life. If there were a revolution he would probably be in the thick of it and get himself killed; and if he followed you to America — failing to kidnap you—he would probably open a cigar-shop on the Bowery."

He had expected tears, but Lydia drew herself up and said, coldly: "I don't think I am in danger of being kidnapped. Strange as it may appear, I feel quite well able to take care of myself, and if with you on one side and father on the other I can't vary the monotony of life with a little flirtation—well, if you were a girl, surrounded by goody-goody people as I have always been, you might be tempted a little way by something that had the glamour of romance."

"Girls must find life rather a bore," said Over, sympathetically. "And I only wish your hero were worthy of you, but, take my word for it, his romantic picturesqueness is only skin — clothes deep. No man is romantic, if it comes to that. I met a long-haired poet once, and when we got him in the smoking-room he was the prosiest of the lot."

"There is no such thing as romance, then?" asked Lydia, with a sigh.

"Not when you are 'up against it,' to use a bit of your own slang."

As the radiating streets were dark they paced slowly about the plaza. For a time Lydia was silent, and Over drew thoughtfully at his pipe. Finally he asked, curiously:

"Do you women really get any satisfaction out of that sort of thing—talking with your eyes and exchanging an occasional note? I mean, of course, unless you have a definite idea that it is going to lead to something?"

"We like any little excitement," said Lydia, dryly, "and the littlest is better than

none. I suppose you are too masculine—too British—to understand that!"

"Well, yes, I am, rather. I fancy what is the matter with girls is that they don't have to work as hard as boys—don't have so many opportunities to work off steam. As for this Johnny, he must be a silly ass if he is content with singing and sighing and rigging himself out. If he isn't—there lies the danger. He'll rally his friends and carry you off. Nothing could be simpler."

"I should be quite like Helen—or Mary, Queen of Scots!"

"Good Lord!"

She flushed under the lash of his voice, but in a moment raised her eyes softly to his. "You are so good," she murmured. "Really like a brother, so I don't mind telling you that I am fearfully interested—but not so much in the mere man as in the whole thing. It has all *seemed* so romantic, at least. I don't believe an American girl ever had such an experience before. However, I will set your mind at rest—since you are so good as to take an interest in poor little me — I haven't the slightest desire

really to know the man. I should be disenchanted, of course, for I could not stand commonness in the most beautiful husk. But—there is something in one quite independent of all that—of one's upbringing, one's prejudices, of common-sense—can't you understand?—the primeval attraction of man and woman. I have been quite aware that all this could come to nothing, but it has been something to have felt that way for once in a well-regulated lifetime; to have been primal for a fleeting moment *is* something, I can assure you."

Over groped in the depths of his masculine understanding. "Well, I suppose so. But what of the man? It is a mere experience to you, but it may be a matter of life and death to a poor devil who is nine-tenths fire and sentiment."

"He, too, has something to think about for the rest of his life."

"And you fancy that will satisfy him?"

"It will have to."

"You might have spared him."

"There can be no romance without a hero."

"Upon my word, you are the greater savage of the two!"

"I told you I enjoyed being a savage for once in my life."

Over made no reply, and if Lydia's glance had not dropped to the uneven pavement, she would have seen his eyes open wide with incredulous amazement and then flash with anger. As it was, she wondered why he hurried her back to the hotel and then practically ordered her up to her room. He stood on the lower step of the stair until he heard her greet Jane; then he left the hotel and walked rapidly down the street again. In a moment he met Catalina.

"Oh," he said, with an awkward attempt at masculine indifference, although his eyes were blazing. "Are you out—alone—as late as this? Isn't it rather risky?"

"I've been walking with Jesus Maria," she replied, coolly. "What a baby you were to walk off through these lonely streets with Lydia! I supposed, of course, that you would talk to her in the hotel. Don't you know that man would have been mad with jealousy if he had seen you? Then

there would have been a fine rough-and-tumble if he hadn't got a knife into your back first. He came along with that everlasting guitar under his arm just after you left, and I told him that Lydia was ill, and asked him to take a walk with me. We'd better give him the slip as soon as possible; he's off his head about her."

"What a little brick you are! What did he have to say?"

"I explained to him that he could never hope to marry Lydia, and elevated the family to the ancient aristocracy of America. It made no impression on him whatever. He expressed contempt for the entire race, barring Lydia, whom he takes to be an angel. I concluded that disloyalty was the better part, and told him that Lydia was nothing but a little American flirt trying to have a sensation. That made even less impression on him—he believes that she is ready to fly with him at a moment's notice. I did more harm than good, and I shall speak to Cousin Lyman to-night."

Over stared hard at her. "That was very brave of you. Aren't you afraid of anything?"

"Not of greasers!" replied the Californian. "I've dealt with them all my life. I treated this one as an equal, and made him forget Lydia in talking about himself. He's a revolutionist, hates the queen because she doesn't go to bull-fights, despises the king, anathematizes all monarchies and aristocracies, and talks like a Fourth-of-July orator about the days when Spain will be a republic, and one of his own sort—possibly himself—will be president. I never heard so much brag in America. But he's full of pluck. Now, you go and call Cousin Lyman out into the hall, and we'll have a consultation."

XII

THE upshot of the conference was the decision that on the following morning the Moultons should conspicuously enter a third-class carriage of the train bound for Baeza, and while Captain Over, on the platform, talked with Catalina in the doorway, they should slip out of the opposite entrance, cross the track, and take the train for Alcazar. The Alcazar train, the landlord assured them, left two minutes earlier than that for Baeza, so that Catalina, in the confusion of the last moments, could join her relatives unobserved. It was the habit of Jesus Maria to saunter down late, and even then to engage in conversation on the platform. Catalina had told him they intended to spend the following night at Baeza, and he was under the impression

they were bound for Seville. Captain Over would take Catalina's place in the doorway, covering her retreat, and await the rest of his party in Baeza.

It was a programme little to the taste of any of them, but Over heroically proposed it, and it seemed to be the only feasible plan.

In Spain there is apparently no law against crossing the tracks, nor in leaving a train on the wrong side. On the following morning Catalina, having reserved a first-class compartment on the train for Alcazar, the six members of the party, portmanteaus in hand, filed down to the station and entered a third-class carriage on the southern train. In a few moments Over descended leisurely and lit a cigarette. Catalina leaned forward to chat with him, then stood up, her bright, amused glances roving over the country people who were bound for a fair in a town near by. The peasants were interested in themselves and contemptuously indifferent to strangers. The Moultons, including the mystified and angry Lydia, descended and crossed the track unobserved. Catalina, one hand on her portmanteau, was ready

to make a dash the moment she heard the familiar drone, "Viajeros al tren." It might be expected within the next five minutes, and it might be belated for twenty.

"There he comes!" she murmured. "If he should take it into his head to enter the train before it starts! We will tell him the others are late. What a pity you don't speak Spanish; you could engage him in conversation! He is looking—glowering at me! Do you suppose he suspects?"

"It is not like you to lose your nerve," began Over, but at the same moment his glance moved from the Catalan's face to hers, and he smiled. She looked, if anything, more impassive than usual. "My knees are shaking," she confided to him, "and my heart is galloping. It is rather delightful to be so excited, but still—thank Heaven!" Jesus Maria had met an acquaintance. They lit the friendly cigarito and entered into conversation.

"They are walking down the platform," said Catalina, anxiously, a moment later, "and the other train is not so far back as this; however, Cousin Lyman will no doubt

keep the door shut. There, he's turning. I'd better make a bolt. Good-bye. Au revoir—"

"Tell me again exactly what I am to do. I don't want to run any risk of missing you."

Catalina glanced over her shoulder. There was such a babble, both in the car and on the platform, that it would not be difficult to miss the singsong of the guard. The other train was still there.

"Do not go to the town. It is miles from the station; there is sure to be an inn close by. If we don't arrive to-morrow night, of course, you will have a telegram; in any case, don't wait for us, but go on to Granada. You can amuse yourself there, and we are sure to turn up sooner or later. Have you that list of Spanish words I wrote out?" He looked forlorn and homesick, and Catalina laughed outright. "Better go straight to Granada," she said.

"Viajeros al tren!"

"Take my place—quick!" whispered Catalina. She let herself down on the other side, dragged her heavy bag after her, and ran.

She had a confused idea that the northern train was closer than it had been, but did not pause until she came to the first-class carriages. Then she saw that the train was empty. At the same instant she heard a whistle, and glancing distractedly up the track saw a train gliding far ahead.

There was not a moment to be lost. It was the guard of the southern train that had sounded his warning cry, and she ran back, dragging the heavy portmanteau—it held the day's lunch, among other things—and almost in tears. It had been an exciting morning, and she had slept little the night before.

She stopped and gasped. The train was moving — slowly, it is true, but far too rapidly for a person on the wrong side with a heavy piece of luggage. She dropped the portmanteau and, drawing a long breath, called with all the might of lungs long accustomed to the ranch cry:

"Captain Over! Captain Over!"

The door of a carriage was opened instantly. Over took in the situation at a glance, leaped to the ground and ran towards her,

caught up the portmanteau, and, regaining his compartment, flung it within. Catalina followed it with the agility of a cat, and in another moment they were panting opposite each other.

Catalina fanned herself with her hat; she would not speak until she could command her voice.

"How was any one to know they would run another train between?" she said, finally. "Poor Cousin Lyman! He must be frantic. Cousin Miranda, no doubt, is delighted. It is my fault, of course—no, it is yours; you should not have engaged me in conversation at the critical moment."

"I will take the blame—and the best of care of you, besides."

She was looking out of the window at the moment, and he glanced at her curiously. She was quite unembarrassed, and what he had dimly felt before came to him with the force of a shock. With all her intellect and her interest in many of the vital problems of life, she was as innocent as a child. She might not be ignorant, but she had none of the commonplace inquisitiveness and mor-

bidness of youth, and he recalled that she had grown up without the companionship of other girls, had read few novels, and little subjective literature of any sort. She had never looked younger, more utterly guileless, than as she sat fanning herself slowly, her hair damp and tumbled, the flush of excitement on her cheek. Over felt as if he had a child in his charge, and drew a long breath of relief. He knew many girls who would have carried off the situation, but their very dignity would have been the signal of inner tribulation, and made him miserable; with Catalina he had but to have a care that she was not placed in a false position; and, after all, the time was short, and they were unlikely to meet any one who even spoke the English language.

She met his eyes, and they burst into laughter like two contented and naughty children.

"I'm so happy to get rid of them I can't contain myself," announced Catalina. "So are you, only you are too polite to say so. I could have done it on purpose, but am rather glad I failed through too much zeal.

Do you understand Lydia?" she asked, abruptly.

"I don't waste time trying to understand women," he replied, cautiously.

"I thought perhaps she confided in you last night. She has tried to unbosom herself to me, but I have not been sympathetic. I don't understand her. I am half a savage, I suppose, but I could go through life and never even see a man like that."

"I can't make out if she loves him."

"Oh, love!" Catalina elevated her nose the higher as the word gave her a vague thrill. "You can't be in love with a person you can't talk to—outside of poetry. Would you call that sort of thing love?"

"No. I don't think I should."

"I fancy it is a mere arbitrary effort to feel romantic." She stood up suddenly and looked over the crowded car, then turned to Over with wide eyes.

"He is not here!" she said.

"Doubtless he is in the next car, or he may have jumped off when he discovered the exodus."

He searched the other cars when the train

stopped again, and returned to report that Jesus Maria was missing. Catalina shrugged her shoulders. "We did our best," she said, "and I, for one, am not going to bother. We'll have them again soon enough."

The great, sunburned, dusty plains were behind them to-day, and the train toiled upward through tremendous gorges, brown, barren, the projecting ledges looking as if they had but just been rent asunder, so little had time done to soften them. In the defiles were villages, or solitary houses, poor for the most part; now and again a turn of the road closed the perspective with a line of snow-peaks. The air was clear and cool; there was little dust. Their car gradually gave up its load, until by lunch-time only one man was left, and he gratefully accepted of their superfluous store. He looked, this old Iberian, like the aged men who sit in the cabin doors in Ireland; the same long, self-satisfied upperlip, the small, cunning eyes, the narrow head of the priest-ridden race. He had done nothing, learned nothing, in his threescore and ten, braced himself passively against the modern innovation,

and could be cruel when his chance came to him. He cared no more for what the priests could not tell him than he cared that Spain could not make the wretched engines that drew her trains. On the whole, no doubt, he was happy. At all events, he was extremely well-bred, and took no liberty that he would not have resented in another.

But Catalina forgot him in the grand and forbidding scene, and she leaned out of the window so recklessly that more than once Over, as if she were a child, put his hand on her shoulder and drew her in. He began dimly to understand that Catalina had something more than the mere love of nature and appreciation of the beautiful common enough in the higher civilization. She tried, but not very successfully, to express to him that the vague desire to personify great mountains, the trees, and the sea, which haunts imaginative minds, the deathless echo of prehistoric ancestors, whose only revenge it is upon time, was doubly insistent in one so recently allied to the tribe of Chinigchinich, whose roots were in Asia.

Of immemorial descent, with the record

in her brain, perhaps, of those ancestors who personified and worshipped the phenomena of nature before the evolution of that first priesthood on the Ganges and the Euphrates, the Nile and the Indus, she had rare moments of primal exaltation. It is a far cry from those marvellous first societies and the vast orderly and complicated civilization, worshipping mysterious and unseen gods, that followed them, to the Chinigchinich Indians of Alta California; and yet, crushed, conquered, almost blotted out, these remnants, in their very despair, reverted the more closely to nature. The beautiful Carmela was the child of Mission Indians who fled back to their mountain pueblos and savage rites when the power of the priests in California was broken. Every inherited instinct had waged war against the Christianity which, in nine cases out of ten, was pounded into them with a green-hide reata. They called the child Carmela, after the Mission of Carmel, merely because they liked the name; but she grew up a pagan, and a pagan remained during the few years of her life. And she was as pure and good,

as loyal and devoted, as any of the women descended from her, heedful of the wild inheritance in their blood lest it poison the strong and bitter tide of New England ancestors. Catalina was the first to feel pride in that alien strain which did so much to distinguish her from the million, and was conscious that she owed to it her faculty to see and feel more in nature than the average Anglo-Saxon.

Over, in the almost empty car, lit by a solitary and smoking lamp, listened attentively as she groped her way through the mysterious labyrinths in her brain, expressing herself ill, for she was little used to egotistical ventures. It cannot be said that he understood, being himself a typical product of the extremest civilization that exists in the world to-day; but he saw will-o'-the-wisps in a fog-bank, and thought her more interesting than ever.

XIII

HE train was two hours late. It crawled into the dark little station of Baeza, and Over and Catalina sat down at once in the restaurant, leaving the problem of the night until later. But, hungry as the Englishman was, that problem dulled the flavor of a fair repast. How was he to protect the girl from curiosity and speculation, possibly coarse remark; above all, from self-consciousness? It would be assumed at the inn, as a matter of course, that they were a young couple, and he turned cold as he pictured the landlord conducting them upstairs to the usual room with a bed in each corner. He heartily wished it was he who spoke the Spanish language and that his companion was afflicted with his own distracting ignorance; but he must interpret

through her, and to discuss the matter with her beforehand was, to him, impossible. For the first time he wished she were with the Moultons in Alcazar.

Catalina did not share his embarrassment. With her hat pulled low that she might attract the less attention, she was eating her dinner with the serenity of a child. As he seemed indisposed to conversation she did not utter a word until the salad was placed beside them, and then she met his disturbed and roving eye.

"You look fearfully tired," she said, smiling. "While you are drinking your coffee I will go and talk to that man behind the counter and see what can be done about to-night. You look as if you ought to be in bed this minute."

"Ah!" He was taken aback, and still helpless. "I must ask you not to talk to any one unless I am with you. They would never understand it. We had better cut the dessert and the coffee and secure what rooms there may be. I suppose most of these people are going on, but a few may remain."

They went together to pay their score, and Catalina asked the functionary behind the counter if there were rooms above for travellers. He replied, with the haughty indifference of the American hotel clerk, that there were not. She demanded further information, and he merely shrugged his shoulders, for it is the way of the Spaniard to know no man's business but his own. But Catalina stood her ground, told him she would stand it till dawn, or follow him home; and finally, overcome by her fluency in invective, he unwillingly parted with the information that behind the station across the road there was a small inn above a *cantina*.

"I am half-way sorry we did not leave a message for Mr. Moulton and go on," said Over, as they stood in the inky darkness and watched the train pull out of the station. "Probably, however, he would never have got it—well, there is nothing to do but make the best of it."

They crossed the sandy road, guided by the glimmer of the *cantina*. Here they found the host serving two men that would

have put the Guardia Civile on the alert. He greeted the strangers politely, however, and called his wife. She came in a moment, smiling and comely, followed by a red-haired girl holding a candle.

Catalina, warned by her recent interview, uttered a few of the flowery amenities that should lead up to any request in Spain. The woman, beaming with good-will, took the candle from her daughter's hand, motioned to the girl to take the portmanteaus, and, without apology for her humble lodgings, piloted them out into the dark, through another doorway, and up a rickety stair. Over, feeling as if he were being led out to be shot by the enemy, saw his worst fears verified. She threw open the door of a tiny, blue-washed room, and there were the two little beds, the more conspicuous as they were uncompanioned but for a tin washing-stand. It opened upon a balcony, and, despite the bareness, it was so clean and inviting it seemed to make a personal appeal not to be judged too hastily. Over was unable to articulate, but Catalina said, serenely, "We wish two rooms, señora."

"Two!" cried the woman, and Over understood both the word and the expression of profound amazement.

"Yes, two." There was no voluble explanation from Catalina. She looked the woman straight in the eyes and repeated, "Two rooms, and quickly, please; we are very tired."

The woman's eyes were wide with curiosity, but before Catalina's her tongue lost its audacity. She replied promptly enough, however.

"But I have no other. It is only by the grace of God I have this. The train was late, the diligences were put away for the night; there were many, and my house is small. I see now, the señor is the señorita's brother—but for one night, what matter?"

Catalina turned to Over. "There is no other room," she said.

Over went into the apartment, and, lifting a mattress and coverings from one of the beds, returned to the hall and threw them on the floor.

"I shall be comfortable here," he said, curtly, glad of any solution. "Go to bed.

I prefer this, anyhow, for I didn't like the looks of those men down-stairs. Good-night."

"Good-night," said Catalina, and she went into the room and closed the door.

"The English are all mad," said the woman, and she went to find a candle for the hallway guest.

It is doubtful if either Over or Catalina ever slept more soundly, and the bandits, if bandits they were, went elsewhere to forage. At dawn Catalina was dressed and hanging over the balcony watching the retreating stars. She heard a mattress doubled and flung into a corner. The room was in order. She flashed past Over and down the stairs. "Go in and dress," she called back. "There is plenty of water, for a wonder."

And he answered, "Stay in front of the window, where I could hear you if you called."

Early as it was, the woman and her brood were in the kitchen at the back of the house, and she agreed to supply bread and cream for breakfast and make a tortilla for the travellers' lunch.

Over came down in a few moments with his coffee-pot and lamp, and they had their breakfast on a barrel-top in front of the inn, as light-heartedly as if embarrassment had never beset them. Life begins early in Spain, notwithstanding its reputed predilection for the morrow, and as they finished breakfast several rickety old diligences drew up between the inn and the station.

There were no passengers for the three little towns, and Over and Catalina went in one of the diligences to Baeza, twelve miles distant. They spent a happy and irresponsible day roaming about the dilapidated sixteenth-century town, and divided their tortilla out in the country in the great shadow of the Sierra Nevada. They retained their spirits over the rough and dusty miles of their return, but lost them suddenly as they approached the station. The train, however, was three hours late this evening, and they philosophically dismissed the Moultons and enjoyed their dinner. They lingered over the sweets and coffee, then paced up and down the platform, the Englishman smoking and feeling like a truant school-

boy. Nevertheless, he was not sorry that the end of the intimacy approached. The results of propinquity might ofttimes be casual, but that mighty force was invariably loaded with the seeds of fate, and he knew himself as liable to love as any man. With the oddest and most enigmatic girl he had ever met, who allured while striving to repel, as devoid of coquetry as a boy or a child, yet now and then revealing a glimpse of watchful femininity, to whom nature had given a wellnigh perfect shell; and thrown upon his protection in long days of companionship—he summed it up curtly over his pipe. "I should make an ass of myself in a week."

He had had no desire to marry since the days of his more susceptible youth—he was now thirty-four—and, although rich girls had made no stronger appeal to him than poor girls, he was well aware that the dowerless beauty was not for him. He was too good a soldier and too much of a man to be luxurious in taste or habit, and, although a guardsman, he was born into the out-of-door generation that has nothing in common

with the scented lap-dogs made famous by the novelists of the mid-Victorian era. But when not at the front he indulged himself in liberty, many hours at cricket and golf, the companionship of congenial spirits, a reasonable amount of dining out, and an absolute freedom from the petty details of life. Travelling third class amused him, the English aristocrat being the truest democrat in the world and wholly without snobbery. Single, his debts worried him no more than bad weather in London; but married, he must at once set up an establishment suited to his position.

He had distinguished himself in South Africa, and his county, rich and poor, had, upon his return, at the very end of the war, met him at the station and pulled his carriage over the miles to his father's house, some two thousand men and women cheering all the way. There had been so many in London to lionize since that war, to which pampered men had gone in their heydey and returned gray and crippled, that when he went up for the season he was merely one of a galaxy eagerly sought

and fêted; but life had never slipped along so easily and pleasantly, and after three years of hardship and many months of painful illness, it had made a double appeal to a battered soldier, still half an invalid. He had dismissed the serious things of life as he landed in England, and devoutly hoped for a five years' peace. Therefore was he the less inclined to fall in love, valuing peace of mind no less than surcease for the body. Catalina was by no means penniless, and certainly would make a heroic soldier's wife; but they had not a tradition in common, and he saw clearly that if he loved her at all he should love her far more than had suited his indolent habit when not 'soldiering. Hence he welcomed the return of the Moultons, and even meditated a retreat.

"A moon in the Alhambra would finish me," he thought, glancing up at the waxing orb fighting its way through a stormy mass of black and silver.

A bell rang, a whistle—the only energetic thing about a Spanish train—shrieked and blustered above the slowing head-

light of an engine approaching from the north.

"You stand here by the Thirds and I'll go up to where the Firsts will stop," began Catalina, but Over held her arm firmly within his.

"No," he said, peremptorily, "you must not be by yourself a moment in this crowd. You would be spoken to, probably jostled, at once, and no doubt a rough lot will get out. We will both stand here by the restaurant door."

"I am not afraid," said Catalina, haughtily.

"That is not the point."

"I was near coming to Spain by myself."

"What has that to do with me?"

She gave a little growl and attempted to free herself by a sudden wrench, but he held her, and she stood sullenly beside him as the train wandered in and gave up its load. In a few moments she had forgotten her grievance and stared at him with expanded eyes.

"Let us go to the telegraph-office," he

said. "Mr. Moulton must have sent a message." But at the office there was naught but the official and the cigarito and polite indifference.

"They missed the train, that goes without saying," said Over. "They are sure to arrive in the morning, I should think, as they can travel comfortably enough at night first class. Will you ask what time the morning train arrives?"

It was due nearly an hour before the train would leave for Granada.

"You will hear your nightingales tomorrow evening," said Over, cheerfully. "The Moultons will never stay here all day."

With this assurance they parted, Over sleeping in another little blue-washed room —the entire fonda had been reserved for the Moultons—and the next morning they drank their coffee from the barrel-top, while their kind and now indifferent landlady made tortillas for the party.

The train arrived on time, and without the Moultons. In the telegraph-office the gentleman of leisure was still smoking, but after inquiring indolently into Over's name

and rank, and demanding to see his cards and correspondence, he produced a telegram. It read:

Toledo, Hotel Castilla. MOULTON.

"Toledo!" cried Catalina. "I want to go to Granada! That is what I came to Spain for. If they go north that far they won't come south again—they will take the steamer at Genoa. I won't go."

"It is by no means certain they won't return; it is only a matter of a day. Doubtless they are still dodging Jesus Maria. I think we had better join them. It is useless to expect explanations by wire. Granada can wait a few days, and Toledo, in its way, must be quite as interesting."

"Well, I'll soon find out," announced his companion.

XIV

URING the journey to Toledo Catalina stared sulkily out of the window or slept with her head against the side of the car. She ignored Over's attempts to converse until, with chilling dignity, he retired to the opposite end of the compartment and wondered how he could have thought of love in connection with a bad-tempered child. He was delighted at the prospect of reunion with the orthodox Moultons, and understood something of their serene contempt for originality. It is true that Catalina asleep, with the deep vermilion on her cheeks, her tumbled head drooping, looked so innocent and lovely that she set him to wondering regretfully why there was no such thing as perfection in woman; and from thence it was but a step

to imagine Catalina with the qualities and training that would make her the ideal of man. There was no harm in indulging one's self in idyllic imagining, by way of variety, Over concluded; doubtless it was good for the soul.

Whatever the motive, his imagination performed unaccustomed feats during the drowsy afternoon, while his companion slept and the other occupants of the car, few in number, smoked and said little. It pictured Catalina ten years hence; she would then be thirty-three, an age he had always found sympathetic in woman; she would have seen the world, have adapted herself to many new conditions, and in the process learned self-control, pared off the jagged edges of her egoism, and supplemented her beauty with a distinction of manner and style that would compel the homage of the best societies of the world.

He had seen what she was capable of, and he suspected that she was ambitious. It was her love of solitude and dislike of mere men and women that had swathed her so deeply in her crudities; but if she carried

out her intention of living for some years in England and Europe, and cultivated the right sort of people, the transformation was almost certain. Perhaps it would be worth while to ask his mother to take care of her in England. Lady "Peggy" Over was a clever, warm-hearted woman of the simple, old-fashioned aristocracy, who offered her sons no assistance in choosing their wives, and had the broadest tolerance for the vagaries of young people. With her lively mind and humor she would win upon Catalina at once, and her complete honesty of nature would finish the conquest of a girl whose hatred of sham was almost fanatical.

Catalina opened her eyes upon him, half awake, and he asked her, impulsively: "What is your ambition? What do you want?"

She answered, sleepily, but without hesitation, "To have four children."

He was too astonished to speak for a moment; then he asked, feebly, "Is that all?"

"No," she said, now quite awake. "I want to meet all the most interesting people in the world, and read the most interesting

books, and show a lot of other people what frauds and useless creatures they are; but I love children as much as I detest most people, and I'll never be contented till I have four. I don't see why you look so dumfounded! What is there so remarkable in wanting children?"

"Oh, nothing," he said, soothingly. "Perhaps we can see Toledo in a moment."

Mr. Moulton met them at the station. His face was flushed and his manner perturbed, but he shook their hands cordially and protested that he had never been so glad to lay eyes on any one.

"Let us walk up," said Catalina, and she strode on ahead. The men followed, Mr. Moulton talking with nervous volubility.

"Of course I did not blame you, my dear Catalina," he reiterated. "Such a contretemps in Spain is easy enough. Mrs. Moulton is still a little upset, but you know what—er—invalids are, and I beg you to be patient—"

"It won't worry me in the least. But

why this change of front? Why didn't you come to Baeza?"

"That wretched peasant saw us as I was craning my neck looking for you, and reached the train in three bounds. Of course, we were safe in the first-class carriage, and at Alcazar I had a brilliant idea. We drove to the hotel, as usual, with all our baggage, and that mountebank—I shall never pronounce his impious name—supposed we were settled for the night. After dinner I told the landlord—through the kind medium of a Frenchman who spoke both English and Spanish—that, being much annoyed by this creature, we had determined to change our itinerary and go direct to Madrid where we could call upon our minister to protect us. We then took the night train and were under way a good hour before it was time for the man to appear with his guitar. I even bought tickets for Madrid, and as we changed cars at midnight we were practically unobserved. We are very comfortable, and are in time for a grand fête."

"How is Lydia?" Catalina asked, dryly.

"The poor child is very nervous, but most

thankful to be rid of the man. By-the-way, I telegraphed as soon as I arrived in Toledo."

"This is Spain," said Over.

The hint of Mrs. Moulton's displeasure had fallen on heedless ears. They were crossing the Alcantara Bridge that leads through the ancient gateway of the same name up to one of the most beautiful cities to look upon in the world. Toledo, the lofty outpost of the range of mountains behind the raging Tagus, is an almost perpendicular mass of rock on all sides but one, its uneven plateau crowded with palaces and churches, tiny plazas and narrow, winding streets, a mere roof of tiles from the Alcazar, which stands on its highest point, but from below a wild yet symmetrical outcropping of the rock itself. Founded, so runs the legend, by a son of Noah, certainly the ancient capital of the Goths and the scene of much that was terrible and romantic in their history, a stronghold of the Moors, who left here as elsewhere their indelible imprint, and later of the sovereigns of Castile, equally inaccessible from the vega and the defile of the Tagus, it was one of the most impregnable cities in history so long

as a man was left to dispute the gates on the steep road rising from the plain. It is to-day a sarcophagus of ancient history, compact, isolated, little disturbed by the outer world, yet with an intense and vivid life of its own.

Catalina hung over the bridge and stared down into the rocky gorge where the river had torn its way, and soldiers of every nation of the ancient world had been hurled, cursing and shrieking and praying, from the beetling heights above. Impervious to Mr. Moulton's kindly hints, she led them through the old streets of the Moors, streets so narrow they were obliged to walk like stalking Indians, but with beautiful old balconied houses on either side, and glimpses of luxurious patio within; not pausing before the broad gray front of the hotel until the trio of cousins had awaited her some fifty minutes.

Mrs. Moulton was so far the reverse of a cruel and vicious woman that she had been, for the good of her soul, too amiable and self-sacrificing for at least thirty years of her life. Not fine enough to have developed loveliness of character, there had, perhaps,

been too few opportunities for reaction, or, if occurring, they had been conscientiously stifled. A good woman, but not of the most distinguished fibre, the effacement of self for the few she loved had been but a higher order of selfishness, and when for the first time in her life a positive hatred possessed her it found her without that greatness which ignores and foregoes revenge. Catalina, it must be confessed, would have tried the patience of far more saintly characters than Mrs. Moulton, and when to a natural antipathy was added the daily jarring of long-tried nerves the wonder was that the crisis did not come sooner.

But Mrs. Moulton was accustomed to self-control and to the exercise of the average amount of Christianity. Moreover, she had her standards of conduct, and held all exhibitions of feeling to be vulgar. Therefore, in spite of her growing and morbid desire to humble Catalina, she might have forborne to force an issue, and perhaps, had circumstances favored the alien, have grimly, however unwillingly, triumphed once more over self.

But these last days had unravelled her nerves. To passionate sympathy for her pale and persecuted daughter, misled in the first instance by the daily example of a barbarian, had recently been added a night of hideous discomfort, when, not one of the four speaking a language but their useless own, and without the invaluable Baedeker, they had fled from a ridiculous peasant, changing trains at midnight, waiting hours at way-stations, arriving at Toledo in the gray, cold dawn, hungry, worried, exhausted, to find neither omnibus nor cab at the station.

As Mrs. Moulton toiled up the steep road through the carven gates of terrible and romantic memory, she had heartily wished that modern enterprise had blown up the rock with dynamite or run an elevator from the Tagus. It was then that her hatred of Catalina—who at least with her knowledge of foreign languages had been an acceptable courier—became an obsession, and she could have shrieked it out like any common virago. The emotional wave had receded, but left a dark and poisonous deposit behind.

It was easy to convince herself that Catalina had lost the train at Albacete on purpose. When her husband had received Captain Over's telegram she had assumed that the Englishman had persuaded the girl to return, eager, no doubt, to be rid of her. She was not prone to think evil, and had one of her daughters or the approved young women of her circle been left with a young man at a way-station for two days and nights, she might have given way to nerves but never to suspicion. But as the crowning iniquity of the author of her downfall, it gave her the opportunity she had coveted, and she burned to take advantage of it.

When Catalina finally announced herself, Mrs. Moulton was standing in the middle of her bedroom and Jane was reading by the window. The latter nodded as the prodigal entered, and returned to her book.

"Well," said Catalina, amiably, "how are you all? I am glad you are rid of the peasant at last. Where is Lydia?" She paused, blinking under the cold glare of Mrs. Moulton's eyes. "What is the matter?" she

asked, haughtily. "Cousin Lyman said you were angry, but you must have known how I was left. I am sorry you didn't have Baedeker with you." This was an unusual concession for Catalina, but something in the bitter and contemptuous face made her vaguely uneasy.

"You were left on purpose," said Mrs. Moulton, deliberately.

Catalina made a quick step forward, the breath hissing through her teeth. She looked capable of physical violence, but Mrs. Moulton continued in the same cold, even tones:

"You remained behind in order to be alone with Captain Over for two days and nights. You are not fit to associate with my daughters. You are a wicked, abandoned creature, and I refuse—I absolutely refuse—to shelter your amours. If you appeal to my husband I shall tell him to choose between us."

Catalina fell back, staring. Innocent she might be but not ignorant. It was impossible to mistake the woman's meaning, and in a flash she understood that by the

evil-minded evil might be read into her adventure. It was then, however, that she showed herself thoroughbred. Her anger left her as abruptly as it had come. She drew herself up, bowed impersonally, and left the room.

Mrs. Moulton, trembling, sank into a chair, and Jane, protesting that her parent had behaved like an empress, fetched the aromatic salts. But Mrs. Moulton, having unburdened her hate, had parted with its sustaining power, and was flat and cowed in the reaction.

"Does it pay?" she demanded again and again. "Does it pay?"

XV

FOR two days Catalina disappeared. Mr. Moulton, distracted, appealed to the police. He knew that his wife had been severe, but the wicked words of her utterance were never repeated to him. But Mrs. Moulton, although spiritually debased, loved Catalina none the better for her condition, and protested that no one was so well able to take care of herself, even demanding that they move on and leave her in charge of the consul. To this Mr. Moulton would not hearken, and he and the equally disquieted Englishman patrolled the streets and haunted the headquarters of the police. The day of the fête dawned and nothing had been seen or heard of Catalina.

Over was alone when he saw her. The narrow streets were packed with people,

and, turning aside to make way for a religious procession, he had become separated from the Moultons. He walked slowly, his head thrown back, gazing at the gay and beautiful sight above him. From every high window and balcony costly brocades and tapestries, embroidered shawls and Oriental carpets depended. The brown old houses, craggy as their high perch itself, warmed into life with the flaunting color. In the balconies were aristocratic men and women, the latter wearing the mantilla, held high with a comb, caught back with a rose. It was an enchanting sight; and above all was the dazzling blue and gold of the sky. Through the chatter of the good-natured crowd wandered the strains of solemn music, and his was the only alien face.

He was staring upward at a little balcony from which hung a magnificent blue silk shawl, embroidered and fringed with white, and admiring the mantillas and roses, the languid fans and fine eyes above it, when Catalina came through the window behind and looked down upon him. She, too, wore a mantilla, the white mantilla of Spanish

lace he had watched her buy in Barcelona. A red rose held it above her left ear, and in her hand she carried her fan. She had also assumed the lofty dignity of the Spanish woman of high degree, and she had never looked so beautiful. For a moment she returned his gaze stolidly, and he fancied she meant to cut him; then she bowed, said something to one of her companions, pointed to the stern, brass-bound door below, and disappeared.

A moment later the door opened and he was shown into the patio, a shadowy retreat from the glare and noise of the street, full of palms and pomegranates, roses and lilies, with a cool fountain playing, and many ancient chairs of iron and wood.

Catalina was standing by the fountain looking as Spanish as if these old walls had encircled her cradle. She shook hands with him cordially.

"I have had a bad time," she said, "and hated you, as well as the Moultons, but it was unreasonable and I am over it. You were as nice and kind as possible, and I shall always remember it. Don't ask me what

that dreadful woman said. I shall forget it, but I shall never speak to any of them again, and I should be glad if you would tell them so, and that I shall remain here until they leave."

His mind grasped at once the substance of Mrs. Moulton's diatribe; he had given the subject no thought before. He turned hot and then cold, and involuntarily took a step nearer to the girl, with a fierce instinct of protection. Catalina may have understood, for a spot of color appeared on her high cheek-bones, but she continued, calmly:

"Of course you want to know where I have been and what I am doing in this house. When I left the hotel I went directly to the archbishop and told him as much as was necessary, using as passport a circular letter the fathers of the mission of Santa Barbara had given me. He brought me here at once. The Señora Villéna has this beautiful house, but is poor — and so kind. I have enjoyed the change, I can tell you."

"You certainly are more in your element. I am glad it has turned out so well. I have been very uneasy."

"Have you? Did you think I had thrown myself into the Tagus, or was wandering about roofless with my big grip in my hand?"

"It was my knowledge of your good sense, familiarity with the language, and winning manner — when you choose to exert it — that permitted me to go to bed at night. Nevertheless, you are not the woman to travel alone in Spain. What are your plans?"

"What are the Moultons' plans?"

"They have had enough of Spain — of travel, for that matter—and they are still in dread of Jesus Maria. They will go from here to Barcelona, take a boat for Genoa, and remain there until their steamer arrives. They say that Italy will feel like home after Spain."

"Then I shall go from here to Granada. Perhaps I can persuade some one to chaperon me, but if not I shall go alone. Nothing shall cheat me out of Granada."

"If you find no one else I shall go with you."

The red spots spread down to her throat,

but she lifted her head higher. "No," she said, "I suppose it does not look right."

He cursed Mrs. Moulton for shattering the serene innocence of the girl; nevertheless, something even more captivating had replaced it. "I shall go," he repeated, "unless I can persuade you to return to America with your relatives. Then my mind will be at rest. But as long as you are alone in Spain I shall do my best to protect you. If you forbid me to travel with you, well and good. I shall merely follow—that is to say, be your companion on the trains. In the towns we need not meet unless you wish it. You can always put yourself under the protection of the woman of the house and employ a duenna. But do adopt me as a brother and dismiss all nonsensical ideas from your mind."

For the first time her eyes fell before his. She turned away abruptly. "You are very good," she said. "Come up-stairs and meet the señora and her daughter. They are charming people."

A few moments later, as they were standing on the balcony, she said to him: "They

are taking me to the bull-fight this afternoon. Shall you go?"

"Possibly. But I am surprised that you wish to go. It is a beastly exhibition and no place for you."

"I am going," she said, imperturbably. "It is a part of Spain, and I should as soon think of missing a religious festival like this. Besides, I have seen bull-fights in southern California. You may as well come with us. Of course, Cousin Lyman is not going."

"Probably not. Very well, I will go with you, if your friends will have me. I must lunch at the hotel with the Moultons and set their minds at rest; but it is an hour until then. Would you care to walk about the streets and see the crowd?"

The Señora Villéna was very large and the day was warm, but she amiably consented to walk as far as the cathedral in the wake of her guest.

"I have not been out alone since I came to her," said Catalina, with a sigh, as she walked beside Over up the street. "At Granada I know of a pension, and liberty will be sweet again."

Over's eyes twinkled as he looked at the face between the soft edges of the mantilla.

"Your new rôle is vastly becoming. I had no idea that two days of Old-World discipline could effect such a change. You look as if you had always walked with a duenna at your heels."

"So I have, nearly always. I never was on the street alone in my life until my mother died. You think me improved?" she added, quickly.

"I did not say that."

"I have always thought your bluntness the best thing about you—I like the short skirt and covert coat best," she said, defiantly.

"They do very well to disguise you on the train; but if I never saw you again I should prefer to remember you as you are now—or as you were that night in Tarragona. You hardly deserve your beauty, you know."

And then, in a new spirit of coquetry, born perhaps of the mantilla, into whose silken mesh many a dream no doubt had flowed, she lifted her chin, dropped her eyelashes for a second, flashed him a swift

personal glance. Before he could adjust himself to the new phase, however, she had dismissed it and remarked that she hoped not to meet the Moultons; and, unaccountably perturbed, he replied that they were sure to be fatigued and resting for luncheon.

It would have been easy to avoid them in the dense crowd packed into the plaza before the cathedral, waiting for the procession to pass. Over and Catalina paused a few moments to look at the superb gobelins with which the façade of the cathedral was hung, and then ran the gamut of the beggars and entered the cloister.

"I shall go into the Chapel of the Incarnacion and pray," said the Señora Villéna, "and meet you here in half an hour—no?"

The Cathedral of Toledo is one of the world's treasures, and all the world should see it; but for those who would or must read the sights of Europe a hundred descriptions of this vast, complex dream in early Gothic and late Renaissance and baroque have been written; and the best is forgotten at the end of an hour's visit.

It was almost deserted, and Over and Catalina walked slowly towards the Capilla Mayor, through the rich brown silence of the nave, whispering occasionally, but overpowered by the forest of shafts uplifting an immensity of vaulting before which the eye reeled. The centuries of carving, as various as the peoples that had come and gone, crystallizing even the broken voice of the Moor, melted into a harmony comparable only, said Catalina, to the wonders of a Californian mountain-forest—of redwood and pine, madroño and oak, and giant ferns as delicate as the lace of her mantilla. There were high vaultings, too, where the sun never ripened the moss on the earth, and endless cryptograms wrought before the hand of man had taken the message of the gods.

Over replied, promptly: "I don't believe half you have told me about California. Next year I shall obtain leave of absence and visit it—that is, if you will be my cicerone."

"Why not this year?"

"Shall I?"

"It is all the same to me, but I may not

be there next year. I need Europe. Of course, I know that I am a sort of cow-boy."

"Ah!" He hardly knew whether to be gratified or not. "Don't desert your ranch altogether—nor surrender all the individuality it has given you. If you should be the great lady in Europe and ranch-girl at home —what a fascinating combination!"

"Well, I can be anything I choose, and on five minutes' notice, too."

"I am sure of it—but which is the real you? I think I know—then I am all at sea."

She gave him another swift, upward glance, but she replied, sedately: "The worst, of course. That is what people always decide when a person suddenly reveals himself in a bad light. Twenty other sides may have been exhibited, but it is the revelation of the worst that always inspires the phrase, 'At last he has shown himself in his true colors.'"

"Then you are too philosophical to condemn Mrs. Moulton utterly?"

"She has taught me the extent of my philosophy, so I forgive her—and ignore her existence."

He made no reply, for he saw the Moultons not three yards away. They were in the Capilla Mayor, their necks craned in a vain attempt to register a permanent impression of the gorgeous coloring, the phalanxes of saints, the riotous beauty of carving on wall and arch and tomb. While he hesitated, Mr. Moulton brought down his tired eyes and they rested on Catalina. He gave a sharp exclamation of pleasure and hurried forward, his hand out-stretched. Catalina had included him in her wrath, but she forgave him instantly, and simultaneously conceived a stroke of revenge. Mrs. Moulton and Jane retreated, but Lydia ran to Catalina and kissed her.

"Where have you been?" she cried. "We have been just wild. How perfectly sweet you look in that mantilla!"

Catalina explained, and Mr. Moulton drew a long sigh of relief. "I shall never worry about you again, my dear child. And now tell me what you wish to do. I trust you will become reconciled—"

"I shall remain in Spain perhaps for some months—I have cancelled my passage. But

I shall like to see *you* again. Will you come to the Casa Villéna immediately after luncheon? I have a little plan to propose to you."

"Certainly I will—but is your decision irrevocable?"

"Quite. Perhaps I shouldn't keep you now. And my duenna must be waiting for me."

She nodded and turned away, but Lydia followed and took her arm.

"I can go back to the hotel with Captain Over," she said to her father, and the two girls walked down the nave with heads together, oblivious of the half-amused, half-sulky man in their wake.

"Well, what of Jesus Maria?"

"I have given up all hope of ever seeing him again."

"Hope? Do you want to?"

"I do and I don't. Of course, it had to end sooner or later, but—well—I *was* fascinated! And there is so little to look back upon! However, it was great fun imagining what things might happen, and all the while to be quite safe under the paternal

wing. I suppose if I had seen him alone I really wouldn't have kissed him—I probably should have run away in disgust—but I enjoyed it all in imagination. Now, I shall be rather relieved when I am safely out of Spain, for I know that he was quite serious. When we were running away from Albacete and then from Alcazar, I felt as serious as he did—I was really romantic and love-lorn—but I took myself in hand when I arrived here, and now I am quite sensible again."

"What a tangle! Is that the way people fall in love—and out again?" Catalina felt puzzled and depressed. Life suddenly seemed commonplace, love a sort of cap-and-bells, to be worn now and again when convenient.

"Well, I wish you good luck," she said. "Write me when you are really engaged, and I'll send you a lot of jewels from our California mines—tourmalines and chrysoprases and turquoises and garnets and beryls. I have jugs full of them."

Lydia's eyes expanded. "Jugs full! They cost frightfully in New York. Will you really send me some?"

"Dozens."

"What a fairy princess you are! I am only beginning to appreciate you, and now you are throwing us over — for good and all!"

"Good-bye," said Catalina, kissing her. "At two, Captain Over, and don't forget to bring Cousin Lyman. And make no confidences," she murmured.

XVI

"BUT, my dear Catalina—why, of course, I cannot go—the idea is preposterous—"

"Now you are talking by the book. Why was Europe made except for the American to play in and refresh himself for the same old duties at home? And for a man of your intelligence to balk at a bull-fight—"

"It isn't that I exactly balk—I mean I am not squeamish—and I could look away at the worst part—but I do not approve of bull-fights, and think it wrong to lend my countenance—"

"The bull-fight will go on just the same; and no one race is good enough to condemn the customs of another. See the world impartially and then go your own gait. Besides, you have come to study Spain, and

how can you pretend to know it unless you see it at its most characteristic amusement? Don't look at the arena if you had rather not—but think of the opportunity to see Spain en masse at its very worst!"

"There is much in what you say, but—great Heaven!—suppose it ever were known in America that I had been to a bull-fight! I should lose the confidence of a million people — I might be driven out of the Church—"

"There aren't a dozen Americans in Toledo—and the bull-ring holds five thousand people. You can sit in the back of the box. No one will be looking at anything but the bull-fight, anyhow."

Mr. Moulton drew a long sigh. He wanted very much to go to the bull-fight; and away from his family and alone with Catalina—whom he could never hope to influence—in this holiday crowd of dark, eager faces he felt almost emancipated and reckless. Over was ahead with the Señora Villéna and her daughter, and they were slowly making their way up the Calle de la Puerta Llana towards the Plaza Ayuntamiento. They reached it

in a moment. It was so crowded with cabs and large, open carry-alls, waiting to take people to the bull-ring, that there was little room for foot-passengers. The carry-alls were very attractive with their six mules apiece, hung with bells and decorated with worsted fringe, and Mr. Moulton sighed again.

Before the archbishop's palace a cab awaited the Señora Villéna. It held but three seats, and she turned with polite hesitation to Mr. Moulton and Captain Over, as they all stood, united at last, beside it.

"I am so sorry," she said, "but I fear—"

"We are going in one of those omnibuses," said Catalina, promptly. "I am simply dying to go that way—with the crowd; and of course you will not object, señora, so long as my cousin is with me."

The señora smiled, very much relieved. "Bueno," she said. "And I will await you at the entrance to the sombra."

"You are a little wretch," said Over as Mr. Moulton, flushed and excited, tucked the señora and her daughter into their cab.

"It won't hurt him, and he will be sure to let it out to Cousin Miranda."

"Oh, I see!" He laughed and went to the emptiest of the rapidly filling carry-alls to secure their seats. Catalina followed immediately, holding Mr. Moulton firmly by the arm. But that beacon-light of American literature had the instinct of the true sport in the depths of his manifold compromises. The die was cast, he had weakly permitted Cataline to commit him, and he would enjoy himself without his conscience.

And it would have been a far more conscience-stricken man than this to have remained unaffected by the gay animation that quickened the very mules. The venders were shrieking their wares; men and women, their hard faces glowing, were fighting their way good-naturedly towards the omnibuses, whose drivers cracked their whips and shouted invitations at so much a head. And then, suddenly, in a corner of the plaza appeared the picadores in their mediæval gorgeousness of attire, astride the ill-fated old nags.

It was the signal to start. The picadores wheeled and led the way to the north, the cabs rattled after; then the willing mules

were given rein, and, jingling all their bells, plunged down the narrow streets to the high-road, scattering the foot-passengers, who, a motley crowd of men, women, boys, girls, infants in arms, streamed after. On the rough, dusty highway they passed 1000 more trudging towards the Plaza de Toros, eating and drinking as they went. They were come from the surrounding towns, many from Madrid, and even they led children by the hand and carried infants blinking in the strong sunlight. They cheered the picadores, who responded with the lofty courtesy of the mediæval general on his way to the wars. Far below there was not a sign of life on the great vega, nor in the villas on the mountain-slopes. All the little world about seemed to be crowded upon the knotted heights of Toledo.

When Catalina and her cavaliers arrived at the Plaza de Toros other crowds were struggling through the entrances, but at the door on the shady side, where tickets were high, there was no one at that moment but the Señora Villéna and her daughter.

They went up at once, the Americans and

the Englishman as curious to see the crowd as the bull-fight. As the box was Catalina's she had no difficulty to persuade the Villénas to occupy the front seats; she sat just behind with Captain Over, and in the obscure depths of the rear Mr. Moulton felt himself to be blest indeed.

"It seems incredible that they bring children here," he said, as his untiring gaze roved over the rapidly filling amphitheatre. "No wonder they are callous when they are grown; but I'll not believe they can see such a sight unmoved at their tender years. I shall watch them with great interest."

It would be half an hour before the entertainment began, but only the boxes were reserved; long before the signal nearly every seat was occupied, from the vulnerable lower row up to the light Moorish arcade through which the sky looked even bluer than above. It was a various and picturesque sight to foreign eyes. Scarcely a woman wore a hat. There were many mantillas, of a texture and pattern so fine there could be no doubt of the breeding of the owners. A

few wore the black rebosa, but by far the greater number were bareheaded, their hair very smooth, and ornamented with high combs, flowers, or pins. There were enough handsome Spanish shawls on the shoulders of the women this fiery day to have furnished a bazaar—brilliant blue shawls heavily embroidered and fringed with white, black shawls, white shawls, red shawls, all of silk, all embroidered and fringed. And it was already a thirsty crowd. Venders were forcing their way between the seats, selling water out of jugs and wine out of skins, and even here the water made a wider appeal than the wine. It was anything but a cruel sea of faces, hard though the Spanish type may be. Many a group of women had their heads together, gossiping, no doubt, while the men waited in stolid expectation of the treat in store, signalled to brighter eyes, or discussed the chances of the day and the talents of the espadas who would do the bulls to death.

"They all now take the sacrament," the señora informed Catalina, who translated for the benefit of the two men. "Last night

they confessed and fasted, and their wives pray until the fight is over."

Mr. Moulton snorted, then reminded himself that he was pleasuring, and ordered his critical faculty into the depths of its shop.

"By Jove!" said Over.

"Somebody you know?" asked Catalina. "Heavens, what a caricature!"

"She is a ripping nice woman, and a countrywoman of your own—a Mrs. Lawrence Rothe, of New York. I met her about in London. Remember, now, she told me she was coming to Spain. She's a bit made up, but what of that? So many are, you know. You should see London at the fag end of the season."

"A bit!" Catalina lifted her nose with young intolerance. "Her hair looks like a geranium-bed. Is that her son? He is rather good-looking."

"That is her husband; they have been married several years. He's quite a decent chap—keen on horses—he looks older than he is—thirty—I fancy. Still, I'm rather sorry for him."

"I should think so. She must be fifty."

"That is severe of you. She's probably getting on to forty-five — not more. I'm told she was a ripping fine woman five years ago, but she has had a lot of trouble—all her children refuse to speak to her, and she got a divorce to marry Rothe. She's really very jolly. If you will excuse me a minute I'll go and speak to her."

The woman, who was adjusting herself at some pains in the next box but one, was extremely tall and thin, and her blazing locks, admirably coiffée as they were above her broken but still handsome face, excited the comment of others than Catalina. She had sacrificed her face to her figure and had reached that definite age when women dye their hair with henna. But even forty is an age when the entire absence of flesh makes a woman look not youthful but like an old maid; and scarlet hair, that would harden a young face, is a search-light above every hollow and patch of manufactured surface. In the case of Mrs. Rothe, however, so distinct was the air of good breeding with which she carried her expensive charms, so proud, yet retiring, her manner, and so

perfect her taste in dress, that she ran no risk of being mistaken for a cocotte. She was stamped deeply and delicately with the brand of the New York woman of fashion, the difference between whom — the same may be said of the small groups of her kind in other great American cities — and the average "stylish" American is as marked in its way as the difference between the Parisian and the French provincial; indeed, the juxtaposition is even more unfortunate, for the Frenchwoman of the provinces is frankly dowdy, and hence escapes looking cheap. Even Catalina, in a moment, felt her unwilling admiration creeping forth to the subtle charm of perfect poise and grooming, the firm yet tactful suggestion of a race apart in a bulk of eighty millions of mere Americans.

Mrs. Rothe was talking to Over with a great show of animation, and her companion—a virile, good-looking young man, evidently college-bred—had greeted the Englishman with an enthusiasm suspicious in the travelling husband.

"She is going to Granada next week,"

whispered Over, significantly, as he took his seat once more beside Catalina. "I have asked if I may take you to call on her to-morrow."

"Yes," said Catalina, absently. The president of the occasion, the mayor of Toledo, had entered his box; the mounted police, in crimson and gold, to the sudden rush of martial music, were careering about the arena driving the stragglers to their seats. A moment later came the Paseo de la Cuadrilla, the procession of all the bull-fighters across the arena to the foot of the president's box—the espadas and their understudies, the banderilleros, the picadores and chulos, all gorgeous in the gold-embroidered short clothes and brocades of old Spain. None of them looked young, in spite of picturesque finery and pigtails, and their smoothly shaven faces may best be described by the expressive Americanism "tough"; but between bull-fights they do not live the lives of model citizens, and may be younger than they look; certainly their calling demands the agility and unbrittle brain-cells of youth.

The president, who received them standing, bowed with much ceremony and then cast a key into the arena. It unlocked one of the dark cells, or toriles, adjoining the arena, where the first of the angry bulls was bellowing for light and space and dinner.

The picadores, with one exception, retired, this hero of the first engagement taking his stand by the door whence all had emerged. The espadas, banderilleros, and others of lower estate, scattered at safe distances from the door of the toril, near which stood a chulo to direct the attention of the bull to the picador, lest he fly first at the unmounted men and disappoint the spectators of their whet of blood.

But the bull might have been rehearsed for his part. As the door of his toril was cautiously opened he flew straight at the blindfolded horse without a side glance or a roar; and not waiting for the teasing prod of the picador's pike, he bored his horns into the luckless animal's side and dragged out his entrails.

Catalina closed her eyes and turned her back—she felt horribly faint—then looked

at Mr. Moulton. He also had turned his back, and his profile was green. Nevertheless, he had the presence of mind to observe a small boy of seven or eight years, whom he had singled out for psychological investigation. The boy looked bored.

"The worst is past for the moment," said Over to Catalina, and under cover of her mantilla he took her hand. "They will take the poor brute out, and the rest is pure sport." And Catalina, in a tensity of emotion, held fast to his hand during the rest of the performance, quite unconscious of the act.

The bull, meanwhile, had dashed for the glittering figures in the middle of the arena, his red horns looking as if they would rip the earth did they encounter nothing more inviting. Then came the graceful, agile antics of the banderilleros. After the chulos, with their flirting capes, had tormented and bewildered the bull for a few moments, first one banderillero and then another received him in full charge, leaping aside as he lowered his horns to gore, and thrust the barbed darts, flaunting with colored ribbons, into

the back of his neck. One man leaped clear over the bull, planting his darts in his flight. The next went over the wall of the arena into the narrow passage below the front row of seats, the bull in full tilt after him, but diverted by a chulo before he reached the wall.

It was true sport, and Catalina had forgotten her horror and was leaning forward with interest, when she gave a sharp cry and dug her nails into Over's hand. The picador, instead of retiring with his stricken horse, had leisurely ridden down the arena to see the sport, and there he sat serenely, the bright entrails of the poor brute upholding him hanging to the ground. But only for a moment. A young horse could have stood no more, and the old hack reserved for the sacrifice by an economical people suddenly sank and expired without a shiver. He had not uttered a sound as the bull ripped him open, but he had started and quivered mightily; he had been dying ever since, and collapsed in an instant.

Catalina cowered behind her fan. "I wish I had not come!" she gasped into

Over's ear. Mr. Moulton was in need of consolement himself. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I had never been to a bull-fight, and you told me you were an old hand at it."

"That was only child's play. And all the accounts of bull-fights I have ever read gave me the impression that the brutality was quite lost in the picturesqueness. This is hideously business-like."

"That expresses it. And there is no enthusiasm as yet, because there has not been enough blood. It will take two more mangled horses to rouse them. Do you want to go?"

"After this act. I'd never sit through another; but I'll see this through."

The bull, the blood streaming from the wounds in his neck where the banderillas still quivered, plunged or darted about the arena, striving to reach his tormentors; but, charge with the swiftness of the wind as he might, the leaping banderilleros either planted their darts or as dexterously plucked them out.

Suddenly the president rose and made a

signal. The chulos and banderilleros enticed the bull to the right of the arena, and then the espada of the first engagement, hitherto posing for the admiration of the spectators, brought forth his sword and red muleta, and, walking with a sort of jaunty solemnity to the foot of the president's box, dedicated the death of the bull to the functionary whose honor it was to preside over this Corridas de Toros. He then walked over to the bull and waved the red cloth before his eyes.

In descriptions of bull-fights, especially when the espada is the hero of the tale, this final episode is always pictured as one of great excitement and involving a terrible risk. As a matter of fact, it is deferred until the bull is nearly exhausted. He has some fight left in him, it is true, and an inexperienced espada might easily be tossed. But those that oftener meet with death in the bull-ring are the banderilleros, who plant their darts as the bull charges. The legs of the picadores are padded, and they are always close enough to the wall to leap over if the bull brings the horse down.

Nothing could be tamer than the final scene in the first act of to-day's continuous performance. The espada danced about the bull for a few minutes, waving his red rag, and then, as the brute stood at bay with his head down, looking far more weary than belligerent, he stepped lightly to one side and drove his sword through the neck in the direction of the heart, a very neat and decent operation.

The bull did not drop at once, and there was no applause. He stood as if lost in thought for a few moments, and the espada was forgotten; he had failed. Then the bull turned, wavered, sank slowly to earth. Another door flew open and in rushed a team of four mules abreast, jingling with gala bells. The bull was dragged out at their tails, and his trail of blood covered with fresh sand.

Catalina rose and bent over her duenna. "We will go now, señora," she said. "But you will remain, of course. I shall be well taken care of."

The Señora Villéna looked up with polite amazement. "You go? Are you ill, dear

señorita? It has only begun. There are many more bulls to kill."

"I have had enough to last me for the rest of my life. Hasta luego."

It was not at every bull-fight that the señora sat in a box, and she settled back in her conspicuous seat thankful that the very bourgeois Señor Moulton had accompanied her singular charge.

As they were leaving the box Catalina saw that another picador had entered and stood precisely as his predecessor had done, with the profile of his blindfolded horse towards the door of the toril. Fascinated, she stood rooted to the spot, some deep, savage lust slowly awakening. Again the door of the toril was cautiously opened; again a bull, as if he had been rehearsed for the part, rushed straight at the helpless horse and buried his horns in his side. Catalina fancied she could hear the rip of the hide. But this bull was more powerful than the other. He lifted horse and rider on his horns, and the picador, amid the belated enthusiasm of the multitude, leaped like a monkey over the wall as the torn

horse was tossed and fell cracking to the ground.

"Well," said Over, "have you had enough? They say, you know, that the horror soon passes and the fascination grows."

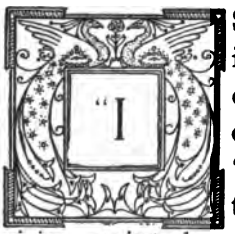
"I am glad to know it was not my Indian blood. I can now understand the fascination, but I shall never come again, all the same."

"We are none of us so far from savagery—Miss Shore, Mrs. Rothe."

They were in the passage behind the boxes, and Mrs. Rothe, who was pallid with disgust and delighted to express herself to a sympathetic woman—her young husband had sulkily torn himself from the ring—walked out with Catalina anathematizing the Spanish race. As they emerged, Mr. Moulton, green and very silent, disappeared. When he returned he was still pale, but normal once more, and after a speech of five minutes' duration, in which, ignoring the finer flowers of his working vocabulary, he consigned Spain to eternal perdition—Catalina had driven off with Mrs. Rothe—he was quite restored, and celebrated his recovery by a long pull at a wine-skin.

"I believe I am quite demoralized," he said, cheerfully; and then, in company with Over and young Rothe—whose wife had amiably bade him stay—he returned to the ring.

XVII



SAW that horse standing in the middle of the arena every time my mind was off guard!" said Catalina. "I woke up suddenly in the night with the hideous vision painted on the dark. I thought it was a judgment on me for going — that I should be haunted by it for the rest of my life. I believe it was Velasquez that banished it, but now I see it only at intervals."

"Perhaps," said Over, "we were wiser in going back. Our savagery was glutted and the imagination blunted. I was never so bored in my life as at the end of two hours of it, and I haven't thought of it since."

They were down in the crypt of the Escorial, in the Pantheon de los Reyes. Mrs. Rothe had offered to chaperon Catalina, and after two days of sight-seeing in

Toledo had returned to Madrid to prepare for the trip south. She had seen the Escorial, and Catalina had come out alone with Over to the grim mass of masonry growing out of the Guadarrama Mountains, which from a distance looks like a phantom casino for dead pleasures. They had wandered over it leisurely, lingering in the cell, with its scant leather furniture, where Philip II. in his monastic arrogance had received the ambassadors of Europe, and peering through the little window of the inner cell upon the same sight that had held his dying gaze as he lay where they, as a great concession, were permitted to stand — a high-mass in the chapel beyond. Then they had descended the fifty-nine steps into the black-and-gold vault where lies the dust of Charles V. and his successors to the throne of Spain, together with the queens who reigned, or mothered kings.

It is an octagonal apartment, with eight rows of niches, the kings on the right of the altar opposite the entrance, the queens on the left. Every sarcophagus, wrought in precisely the same elaborate pattern, is of

black marble heavily encrusted with gold. The handful of dust that once was chief of the Holy Roman Empire is in the sarcophagus on a level with the top of the altar, and below him is Philip II. There is none of the picturesque confusion, the vagaries of different epochs, nor the lingering scent of death of the Kaisergruft in Vienna. It might have been built yesterday, but it has the sombre richness, the lofty dignity of Spain itself.

There were only two empty niches, and the guide informed his patrons that they awaited the young king and the late Queen Isabella.

"Where is she now?" asked Catalina. "Why is she not here?"

"Oh, she must remain in the Pudridero for ten years," said the guide, indifferently. "It is the custom. For some it is only five years, but she was very fat."

Thus was explained the purity of the atmosphere.

They ascended thirty-four of the steps and wandered through that white marble quarry, so brilliant, so new, so cheerful,

where lie the lesser dead of the House of Spain. There are rows and rows and rows of them. In one octagonal, snow-white mass, exactly resembling a huge wedding-cake, the dust of many children has been put away, and the gay coat of arms embellishing it seems cut there to cheer the little ones in their last sleep. Many of the glistening sarcophagi are as yet without inscription, awaiting, no doubt, time and the Pudridero.

Above, in the Sacristia and Ante-Sacristia, they were shown the magnificent vestments and altar-cloths with which the uneasy Isabella, as age waxed and time waned, propitiated Church and saints. And what she had been was discreetly forgotten; she had descended into the Pudridero fortified with the odor of sanctity.

They dismissed the guide and walked down the foot-path to the lower town. For a time they preserved the tranquil silence which is so pleasant an episode in friendship; for although this friendship was barely three weeks old, they had enjoyed so much in common, and companioned each other

through so many annoyances, quarrelled and made up so often, discovered so many points of sympathy and disagreement, they had come to take their intimate association as a matter of course, while still their mutual interest deepened.

Over stole a glance at his companion as she looked aside into the gardens. She had restored the short skirt to favor, but to gratify Mrs. Rothe, who was shocked that so much beauty should go to waste, she had bought a gray silk blouse and a soft gray hat. Still she looked more like the aggressive Catalina to whom he had grown accustomed before the brief, distracting interval of the mantilla. He was well again after these three weeks of almost open-air life, much heat, and uninterrupted freedom, and carried his tall, thin figure with military erectness, while his keen eyes seemed always laughing and there was a tinge of color in his dark face. He now not only looked the handsome, highly bred, intelligent Englishman who might have had an Italian or Spanish ancestor, but his magnetism was alive again, and the observant Catalina

noticed that women stared at him and occasionally lay in wait.

The hotel in Madrid where they were all stopping was full of travellers and of deputies, many of whose wives were handsome, and dressed like women who looked to life to furnish them with much amusement. Catalina speculated and occasionally flew into a rage; for this trip in Spain he was all hers, if she never saw him again, and she was ready to spit fire upon possible rivals.

She was not in her most amiable mood to-day. The hotel was on the Puerta del Sol, the noisiest plaza in Europe. If the throngs that haunt it ever go to bed they must get up again at once, and Catalina, whose rest was broken, wondered how Spain had ever acquired the reputation for indolence. Moreover, it was quite true that the horrors of the bull-ring had haunted her almost to the point of obsession, and as she was too philosophical to wish the done undone, she took refuge in wrath against herself for not meeting the inevitable with her usual stolidity. She prided herself greatly upon her Oriental serenity, and looked upon

her temper as a mere annex, which, no doubt, would be absorbed in time.

She turned suddenly with a little frown.

"There's an end to our travelling third. I broached the subject last night, and Mrs. Rothe looked as if I were stark mad. She has no snobbish scruples, but I suppose the poor thing has never been uncomfortable in her life. She asked me politely if I could not afford to go in the luxe that runs between here and Granada once a week, and, of course, I had to admit that I could. But I hate it. Couldn't we go third and meet her there?"

"I am afraid we have no good excuse—and it would take nearly two days by the slow trains. I rather think you should be thankful for the solution of Mrs. Rothe."

"You need not preach. I am. But when I come back to Europe I'm going to pretend to be a widow and travel by myself."

"Are you so in love with liberty?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, I have always thought highly of it myself," he said, lightly. "How do you like Mrs. Rothe, on the whole? Don't you

find her a good sort, in spite of her foibles?"

"Follies, I should call them. Yes, I like her, if only because she has taught me that a person may be foolish and yet be wise; decorate herself like a cocotte and yet be a lady; violate half the rules one has been brought up on and yet be more estimable than the wholly virtuous—Cousin Miranda, for instance."

"Those would be dangerous deductions for some girls, but you have a ripping strong head. You ought to be as grateful for that as for your beauty."

"I wish you'd stop preaching."

"I never preached in my life," he said, indignantly. "I was merely thinking aloud —uttering an obvious fact. I might add that I wish your temper was in the same class with your good looks and commonsense."

"Well, it isn't. Do you approve of second marriages?"

"Never given a thought to the subject. If ever I marrled it would not be with the divorce court among the future possibilities."

"I was not thinking of divorce—although Mrs. Rothe, in a way, suggested the question. But I wonder how it feels to be married to a second man, especially if you were in love with the first—and most youthful marriages are for love. I picked up an old volume of Hawthorne the other day and came across the phrase, apropos of a second marriage, 'the dislocation of the heart's principles.' You never forget a phrase like that. And I have been wondering."

"One is so different at twenty-five and thirty-five. It is almost like being reborn. And so many youthful marriages result in disillusion and disappointment you can hardly blame the victims for taking another try at it. There is such a thing as sacrificing too much, and I fancy Mrs. Rothe has. Still, there is something magnificent in the big gambler, and Mrs. Rothe must have more courage than weakness to stake all on one throw."

"I don't know that I blame her if she never was happy before; but sometimes first love is real love—I mean, of course, when it is; mere fancies don't count. But if one

has any brain and a moderate amount of experience, one must know when one has been through the real thing. I am thinking now of two people who have been married long enough to find out. It is, no doubt, a matter for speculation before that; and that is the reason so many girls marry and are happy, even though they have broken their hearts several times—you see, women live the life of the imagination until they can live in fact. But when one has actually lived for some years with a man and loved him and he dies — that is what I mean. Don't you think it is the second-rate person who marries again? I have a theory, in spite of Hawthorne, that mistaken marriages don't count—I mean so far as the soul, the inner life, is concerned,— but that the real one counts forever, and that consolement with another partner presupposes shallowness and a lack of true spirituality. Fancy being equally happy and in deepest accord with two men. It is disgusting."

"It certainly is unideal. And every Jack has his Jill. I don't doubt that—don't in the least believe a man could be equally

happy with any one of a hundred charming and intelligent women—not if he wanted the best out of life. But it is fortunate, perhaps, that the majority don't do any deep imagining. Then you think yourself capable of being faithful to a memory?" he added, curiously.

"I know I could be—and happy, in a way; certainly far happier than if I settled down into a commonplace content with another man. It is the inner life that counts, nothing else."

"How do you know these things?"

"How did you know you would be brave in battle before you were ever in one?"

"Didn't. Was awfully afraid I'd funk it."

"Well," she said, laughing, "perhaps that wasn't a fortunate comparison. But one can have intuitions without experience, especially if one lives a more or less solitary life, and thinks. However, I have visions of myself as an old maid on the ranch with half a dozen adopted children. Falling in love is too hard work."

"Is it?"

"Well—it has always seemed so to me."

She colored, more angry with herself than with him. "I don't pretend to any great amount of experience, but you are so ridiculously literal."

"You make cocksure assertions, and then get in a rage if I treat them respectfully. When I don't, you hiss at me like a snake. I don't complain, however, for I am now a qualified and hardened subject for matrimony."

"I suppose you mean that I will make all other women seem like angels. You will have something to thank me for."

"If any man ever has the courage to propose to you, and you bend so far as to accept him, and his courage carries him as far as the altar, is it your intention to nag him through life as you have nagged me in the past three weeks?"

"Have I nagged you?" She turned her wondering eyes upon him. "I never—so I thought—have treated any one so well."

"Great God!" But he was nonplussed at her sudden change of front, as he always was. "There have been times," he continued in a moment, "when you have been

quite the most charming woman in the world."

Her wondering eyes were still on his, the rest of her face as immobile as the Sphinx. He blundered along.

"I have been on the verge of proposing to you more than once."

"Why didn't you?"

"You have a way of breaking the spell just at the critical moment. I am never sure whether the you I am sometimes in love with is really there or only assumed, like one of your rarely worn gowns. There are times when I think you have every possibility, and others when I believe you to be merely a more subtle variety of the American flirt."

"Well, I'm sorry you didn't propose," she said, sedately. "Now I suppose you never will. You would have been quite a feather in my cap."

"That means you would not have accepted me?"

"Did you imagine I would?"

"There have been times when I did." He was now goaded into boldness.

"Well, you're just a conceited Englishman!" she cried, furiously. "If I thought you meant that I'd never speak to you again!"

"Now I know where I am," he said, serenely. "This, after all, is the only you I am at home with."

"Well, don't speak to me again for twenty-four hours. I can't stand you. Thank Heaven, there is the train!"

Some hours later he found her sitting at the drawing-room window of the hotel looking down upon the most characteristic sight in Madrid—the afternoon procession of carriages.

From four o'clock until any hour of a fine night, while the national stew simmers on the back of the stove, the wealth and fashion, and those that would be or seem to be both, drive out the Calle de Alcala to the great paseos and parks, and back through the narrow Carrera San Jeronimo in an unbroken line that bewilders the eye and creates the delusion of an endless and automatic chain. There are more private carriages in Madrid than in any city in the world, and in

bright weather their owners would appear to live in them, indifferent to hunger or fatigue. Those who have Paris gowns exhibit them, those who have not hide their poverty under the always picturesque mantilla; but few are so poor as not to own a turnout. A woman of any degree of fashion in Madrid will sell her house if necessary, her furniture, her jewels, and live in two rooms with one or no servant, but have her carriage and her daily drive she will; for to lose one's place in that distinguished chain would be to lose one's hold on the world itself. So long as they can see and be seen daily in the avenues they love, bow to the same familiar faces, and criticise the gowns of friend and foe, the *olla podrida* can burn and the frock under the mantilla be darned and turned, the daughters dowerless, and even theatre tickets unavailable. They have, at least, the best in life; and then there is always the long morning in bed and the bull-fight. And who would not envy a people so tenacious of the desirable and so bravely satisfied?

Catalina was at the window on the Carrera

San Jeronimo, and there was no one else in the sala at the moment. Over approached in some trepidation, not having been spoken to since the final word on the slope of the Escorial; but Catalina, diverted by the bright birds of paradise on their homeward flight, looked up and smiled charmingly. She wore one of her white frocks, and a string of pearls in her hair, and stirred the languid air with a large black fan. In a strong light she was always beautiful, and in the late, sun-touched shadows of evening, with her pretty teeth showing between the red, waving line of her lips, she looked very sweet and seductive.

"I suppose I ought to apologize," said Over, who had had no thought of apologizing.

"You did say very rude things, but I squared them by losing my temper. If we begin to apologize—" She shrugged her shoulders and lowered her lashes to the hats and mantillas below.

He took the chair before her. "Let us talk it out," he said. "What do you think? Is this close companionship of ours going

to end in love, or are we the usual passing jests of propinquity? I admit I have never been so hard hit in my life; but at the same time I am not completely floored. Perhaps that is only because I am too contented in a way. If we were separated for a time, I fancy I'd know."

"Your sense of humor must have flown off with your national caution. I never before heard of a man asking a girl to straighten out his sentiments for him."

"I don't care a hang about traditions. If I love you I want to marry you, and if I don't I'd rather be shot. I am talking it out in cold blood when I can, and this unromantic spot, with all that infernal clatter down there, is as good a place as any. Besides, I don't want you to think that I am not capable of being serious—of appreciating you. Life would be unthinkable happiness if we loved each other—"

"You take for granted that if you managed to reach the dizzy height, I should arrive by the same train." She spoke flippantly, but he saw that she had broken the sticks of her fan.

"I told you once before to-day that I believed every Jack had his Jill. If I loved you it would be for what you had in you for me alone—I know what the other thing means. You are as much in doubt as I am. As for myself, I perhaps would be sure if you were not so beautiful; but there are times when you blind, and I don't intend to make that particular kind of a silly ass of myself."

"Well," said Catalina, rising, "I have a fancy we will find out in Granada — by moonlight in the Alhambra and all that sort of thing. One thing is positive—we are in the dark at present, and the conditions are not illuminating. Here comes Mrs. Rothe." As she moved off she turned suddenly. "If you should continue indefinitely in this painful state of vacillation," she said, sweetly, "you may consider these two little conversations decently buried. For my part, I like friendship, and we have become quite adept at that."

XVIII

HIS is Granada—Granada—Granada—and we are living in the Alhambra—somehow I always pictured the Alhambra as a mere palace, not as a whole military town where thousands lived; and to be actually domiciled in one of its old streets—its old, steep, narrow, crooked streets—I don't quite realize it, do you?"

"I shall feel more romantic when I have cleaned up—and some one has stolen my pipe."

"Oh, I hate you!" said Catalina, but she forgot him in a moment.

She had persuaded Mrs. Rothe to go to a pension instead of a hotel—she had heard of one frequented mainly by artists—and with less difficulty than she had anticipated, for it was the season of travelling Americans,

and her erring but sensitive chaperon was weary of being stared at. The front windows of the pension looked upon a street whose paving-stones and walls had echoed the tramp of Moorish feet for nearly 1000 years, and are still as eloquent of that indomitable race as if the Spanish conquerors had never passed under the Gate of Justice. In an angle at the back of the house was a garden with a long, latticed window in its high wall, and beyond were the great shade-trees of Alhambra Park. There was a sound of running water and the hum of drowsy insects, but it seemed as quiet as a necropolis after the long flight from the station behind the jingling mules into Granada, and the following drive over the rough streets of the city up to the heights of the Alhambra.

Catalina's room had windows on both street and garden, and she could look down into Over's room in the other side of the angle, on the floor below. The garden, although the kitchen opened upon it, was full of sweet-smelling flowers and rustic chairs, and at one end was a long table where a man sat painting. There were no palms

here, for Granada is 2000 feet above the Mediterranean and the eternal snows are on the Sierras behind her.

"I suppose, then," said Catalina, after a half-hour's dreaming, "that you don't mind if I go for a walk without you?"

"Oh, do wait! I'm quite fit now."

"I'll meet you down in the street."

On her way through the quaint, irregular house she met a tall, fine-looking girl, who half smiled and bowed as if welcoming her to the pension. For a moment Catalina wondered if by any chance her family could have bought out the Spanish proprietors, but dismissed the thought. The girl was not only unmistakably American, but of the independent class. She wore a blue veil about the edge of her large hat, and her ashen hair in a single deep curve on her forehead. Her white shirt-waist and white duck skirt were adjusted with a perfection of detail that suggested the habit of a maid or of time and concentrated thought. Her features were good, and in spite of a hint of selfishness and rigidity about the mouth, and a pair of rather cold gray eyes, her smile

was very sweet. But her claim to distinction was in her grooming, her beauty mien, and in her subtle air of gracious patronage.

"She looks like a princess and yet not quite like a lady," thought Catalina. "What can she be?"

Over joined her, and as the two gray, harmonious figures walked down the street Catalina turned suddenly and looked at the pension. The girl in white was leaning from one of the upper windows. But this time the cool gray eyes had no message for one of her own sex. They dwelt upon the Englishman's military and distinguished back. Catalina thrilled to the vague music of unrest deep in some unexplored nook of her being. The second response was a snapping eye which she turned upon Over.

"I met an American girl as I was coming out that I have taken a dislike to," she announced. "She has a most absurd patronizing manner, and looks as if she were trying to be the great lady but couldn't quite make it. I prefer the Moultons, who are frankly suburban.'"

"I thought the Moultons very jolly—poor

souls. I suppose they have reached the haven of an Atlantic liner by this."

"Did you see that girl?" asked Catalina, sharply.

"What girl? Oh, in the pension, just now. I passed a rather stunning girl on the stairs—but there are so many girls! Shall we wander about outside a bit before getting the tickets?"

The great red towers of the Alhambra were before them, and Catalina forgot the Unknown. There happened to be no one else in the Plaza de los Aljibes as they entered it, and the afternoon was very warm and still. They lingered between the hedges of myrtle, the flower best beloved of the Moor, and disdaining the upstart palace of Charles V. looked wonderingly at the featureless wall that hid so much beauty, and in its time had secluded from the vulgar the daily life and gorgeous state of the most picturesque court in Europe, and such harems of varied loveliness as never will be seen again. Only the Tower of Comares, rising sheer from the northern wall of the Assabica Hill, is as visible from the plaza as

from the courts, of whose life it was once a part.

"It was from that window that the Sultana Ayxa la Horra, the mother of Boabdil el Chico, let him down to the Darro with a rope made of shawls so that he could escape from Granada before his dreadful old father murdered him," volunteered Catalina. "But of course you have read all about it—there never was a more delicious book than *The Conquest of Granada.*"

"Never heard of it, and am densely ignorant of the whole thing. You will have to coach me, as usual."

"Then I suppose you don't know that we should have no Alhambra to-day—hardly one stone on another—if it hadn't been for Irving —an American! How do you like that?"

"You know I have no race jealousy, and I had just as lief it had been Irving as any other Johnny. What difference does it make, anyhow? We have the Alhambra. It's like bothering about who wrote Shakespeare's plays."

"That doesn't interest you?"

"Not a bit. The plays don't much, for

that matter. I'm glad our literature has them, but all that sort of speculation seems to me a crying waste of time and mental energy. Let's have the lecture. What did you say your black's name was?"

"Black! Boabdil had beautiful golden hair and blue eyes." And she sketched the vacillating fate of that ill-starred young monarch while they sat on a bench opposite the great façade of the Alcazaba, that once impregnable citadel swarming with turbaned Moors. To Catalina they were almost visible to-day, so vivid was her historical sense; and, as ever, she caught Over in the rush of her enthusiasm. He always invited these little disquisitions, less for the information, which he usually forgot, than for the pleasure of watching the changing glow on Catalina's so often immobile face. Moreover, she was invariably amiable when roaming through history. Her voice, in spite of its little Western accent, was soft and rich and lingered in his ear long after she had fallen into a silence which presented a contemptuous front to such masculine artfulness as he possessed.

To-day, after they had passed through the little door of the Alcazaba, she fell abruptly from garrulity into a state of apparent dumbness; but Over walked contentedly beside her in the warm and fragrant silence of the ruin. Except for the ramparts and the two great watch-towers where the Moor had contemplated for so many anxious months the vast army and glittering camp of Ferdinand and Isabella on the vega beyond Granada, and the sheer sides of the rock on which the fortress was built, there was little to suggest that it had once been the warlike guardian of the palace. It rather looked as if it had been the pleasure-gardens of a pampered harem, with its winding walks between terraces of bright flowers, its fountains, overgrown, like the fragments of wall, with ivy, and its grottos, always cool, and of a delicious fragrance; while from every point there was a glimpse of snow mountain or sunburned plain.

After they had rambled in silence for an hour Catalina emerged from her centres and suggested that they go up to the platform of the Torre de la Vela. From that high point,

famous for having been the first in Granada to fly the pennons of Aragon and Castile, they saw the perfect rim of hills and mountains that curve about the city and its vega. On the tremendous ridges and peaks of the Sierras, no less than on the blooming slopes of the lower ranges, there once were watch-towers and fortified towns, the outer rind of the pomegranate which the Spaniards stripped off bit by bit until they reached the luscious pith that so aptly symbolized the delights of the Moorish stronghold. The fortresses are gone, but the eternal snows still glitter, the Xenil is as silvery as of yore, while the sloping city of Granada itself presents an indescribably ancient appearance, with its millions of tiles, baked and faded by the centuries into a soft, pinkish gray, its streets so narrow that one seems to look down upon a vast roof, from which crosses and towers rise like strange growths that mar the harmony of a scene otherwise perfect in line and delicate color. The solitary tower of the cathedral rises from the mass of roofs like a mere monument above the tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella, who, for

all they lie in consecrated stone, have ever about them the phantom of the ancient mosque.

Above the roofs the very air was pink; and out on the shimmering vega to the western hills the sun was seeking to pay his evening visit. On the right, or north, of the Alhambra, across the river Darro, was the Albaicin on a steep mountain spur, once both sister and rival of the palace hill, "the whole surrounded by high walls three leagues in circuit, with twelve gates, and fortified by 1030 towers." It was, in general, faithful to Boabdil el Chico, Catalina informed her companion, thirsty for knowledge, and was the scene of terrific battles between that whim of destiny and his unrighteous old father Muley Aben Hassan. To-day it is given over to thousands of gypsies, who are faithful to nothing but their nefarious and ofttimes murderous instincts. But by far the most imposing objects in the extensive panorama, after the snow mountains, were the ruined towers of the Alhambra itself. Besides the three in the foreground, and Comares, or romantic

memories, was a line in varying stages of picturesque decay, extending along the precipitous bluff overhanging the Darro. Between were gardens of glowing flowers, narrow streets, ruined walls, wild patches of wood where the cliff-side jutted; and on the south side of the Alhambra hill, parallel with the Darro, the dense park of elms planted by the Duke of Wellington.

"There is the town of Santa Fé," said Catalina, pointing to a speck on the edge of the vega. "Ferdinand and Isabella caused it to be built when they were in camp. The articles of Granada's capitulation were signed there, and their contract with Columbus. Over there in the Sierras, somewhere, is the spot where Boabdil turned to take a last look at Granada, and was reproached by his mother—who was far more of a man than he was—for weeping like a woman for what he could not defend like a man. When I was a child my mother used to sing me to sleep with 'The Last Sigh of the Moor.'"

And she suddenly trilled forth with an abandonment of sorrow which startled Over more than any phase she had yet exhibited.

"'Ay, nunca, nunca, nunca mas veré!' That means, 'Aye, never, never, never more to see,'" she translated, practically. "How close it brings the island of Santa Catalina, undiscovered by the tourist then, and our lonely little inn! My mother always sang me to sleep in a big rocking-chair, and my father sat by a student-lamp and read, frowning until she had finished. It all seems a thousand years ago."

"Did you miss your parents much?" asked Over, curiously.

For a second it seemed to him that he saw a window open in the depths of her eyes. Then she turned her back on him. "I don't live in the past," she said. "Let us go down into the park. It will be dusk in a few moments, and the nightingales will sing."

They lingered awhile among the terraces watching the sun go down, then descended through the Gate of Justice into the park. There the steep aisles were dim, there was the murmur of running water, and in a few moments the nightingales burst forth into song.

Over and Catalina sat down on a grassy bank. There appeared to be no one in the park but themselves. The man looked up, half expecting to see turbaned heads and flashing eyes on the towers and ramparts above; or the glittering cavalcade of Ferdinand and Isabella crowding through the Gate of Justice; or the faithless wife of Boabdil stealing out to her fatal tryst with Hammet of the Abencerrages. In the warm duskiness of the wood under the watch-towers and ramparts, and the fountain of Charles V. beside them, the music of nightingale and distant waters thrilling the soft, voluptuous air, it was easy to imagine that the walls of Granada had yielded to neither the Spaniard nor to time. They were the most romantic moments he had ever known; and the Alhambra is the most romantic ruin on earth, the one where the modern world seems but a bit of prophetic history, and 400 years are as naught.

But there came a moment when he retraced his flight and stole a glance at Catalina. If she were as thrilled with the sense of his nearness as he with hers in these glades

of teeming memories, she gave no sign. With her head thrown back and eyes half closed she appeared to be drinking in the delicious notes of the nightingales. She was quite as beautiful as any of the captive sultanas who had whiled away the hours for their fierce lords in the mysterious apartments above — and startlingly like. Such women, white of skin, dark and sphinxlike of eye, with delicate features and tender forms, were sought throughout the East to tempt the sated appetite of the Moorish tyrants. Just so had women with wistful, upturned profiles listened to the dulcet notes of the nightingale floating down from the trees beside Comares into the spacious courts beneath their narrow windows, dreaming of the lovers they would never see. How like she was! In looks, yes; but he laughed outright as his fancy pictured Catalina as even the reigning favorite of a harem where a mistaken monarch sought to filch her of her liberty and bend her will. His abrupt, half-conscious laughter rent the spell of the evening, and Catalina sprang to her feet.

"I forgot to ask the dinner-hour," she said. "But it must be time. I am starved."

She walked rapidly up the hill, and Over followed, conscious that he had thrown away one of the exquisite moments of life, and hardly knowing, now that the intoxication had passed, whether he would have it so or not.

XIX

THEY found the guests of the pension at dinner in the garden. There were ten or twelve people at the table, and Over and Catalina were conscious of a conspicuous entrance; and a certain familiar lighting of the eye in those facing the door heralded them as a distinguished young couple on their honeymoon. Catalina, whose spirits had ebbed far out, frowned and took the vacant chair beside Mrs. Rothe, that at least she might not be obliged to talk to a man, and Over sat himself beside the husband. In a moment Catalina saw her mistake; there was but one person between her cavalier and the blonde young woman who had inspired her with distrust.

The American girl sat at the head of the table with the air of a hostess entertaining

her guests. She was perhaps twenty-six, but she had the aplomb of a woman who not only has been a gracious hostess for many years, but has exacted and received much tribute. She wore a thin black gown which became her fairness marvellously well, and had dressed her smooth, ashen hair both high and low. Her long back was straight without effort, and if her shoulders were a shade too broad her waist and hips were less mature. Everybody else looked dowdy in comparison, even Mrs. Rothe suffering an eclipse.

But if her toilette was triumphant, her manner was more so. On one side of her sat a Frenchman, on the other a Spaniard, opposite Captain Over a German, and she addressed each in his language, taking care that none should suffer at the expense of the other; and it was manifest that they all adored her. She was, in fact, a brilliant figure, and if her sweet smile was somewhat mechanical, and her fine, gray eyes keen and passionless, her swains were too dazzled by her manner and her handsome appearance to detect the flaws.

Catalina cocked her ears, but found neither wisdom nor cleverness in the remarks that fell from the thin, well-cut lips. It was the girl's linguistic accomplishment, her bright manner of saying nothing, and willingness to hear men talk, that were responsible for the delusion that she was a brilliant woman. Catalina's curiosity could no longer contain itself, and she turned abruptly to Mrs. Rothe and spoke for the first time.

"Who is she?" she asked. "Have you heard?"

"Her name is Holmes, and I heard her sister, that dowdy little artist over there, call her Edith."

"I wonder who—what—she is?"

"Nobody in particular, I should think."

"But she—she—dominates everything."

"That is the American girl—a certain type. You'll see a great many of them if you go about enough. This specimen was born with a respectable amount of good looks, a high opinion of herself, and some magnetism. On her way through life she has acquired what some call autorité, others bluff. She probably has no position to

speak of at home—she never would wear her hair in that Florodora lump on her forehead if she had—but she has made a great deal of running in summer and winter resorts, and in Europe. The study of her life is twofold: dress and how to please men—while deluding them that they are graciously permitted to please her. Her knack for languages stands her in good stead, her tact is almost—never quite—perfect; for she too often makes the mistake of snubbing women. She knows the value of every glance, she has a genius for small talk and dress—probably she has not an income of a hundred and fifty dollars a month, and her sister has to dress like a sweep to help her out—and I should be willing to stake all I have that she dances to perfection. She is the sort of girl that men delight to make a belle of, not only because she flatters them and is always 'all there,' but because she does them so much credit. But they usually are quite content to swell her train, and forget to propose. What she is on the lookout for, of course, is a rich husband; but every year she becomes more and more the veteran

flirt, more polished and mechanical, and less seductive, and will end by taking any one she can get."

"She is a type, then. I fancied her unique."

"Dear me! There are hundreds like her."

"All the same, I can't take my eyes off her. She fascinates me. I don't like her—but I think I'd like to be like her."

"Heaven forbid! She is a very second-rate person, my dear, and your beauty is real, while hers is only a matter of effect. She fascinates you because she is young and successful, and you see her like for the first time. But she is nothing in the world but a man's woman, and while as chaste as an Amazon—I suppose Amazons were chaste—has probably been engaged several times—the type is sentimental—I might add, experimental. I caught Lolly hanging over her this afternoon, and she will doubtless put him through his paces. It won't hurt him; she is not the type that men die for—not even what the French call an allumeuse—just a plain American flirt."

"She has style," sighed Catalina.

"Of a sort," said the New-Yorker, indifferently. Then she turned suddenly to Catalina with the charming sympathy of glance and manner that blinded her friends to the poor ruin of her face. "How you could rout her if you would!" she said. "Don't you know, my dear, that the woman who receives that sort of promiscuous adulation is always the woman who wants it, who works for it? Given a decent amount of natural charm, and any determined woman can be a belle. But it means more work and self-repression, more patience with bores as well as with the wary, than you would ever give to it. And it means popularity with men and nothing more; no depth of accomplishment or interest in anything vital; and under that assumption of glorified independence she is really a slave, afraid to relax her vigilance lest she lose her hold, never daring to be absent-minded or careless in her dress. Of all the girls I have ever known you have the least reason to envy any one—so banish the cloud!"

Catalina glowed, and reminded herself of the opportunities thrust upon her to be

the belle of a season that she had spurned with less than politeness; but in a moment her brows met and she lost her appetite. Over had been drawn into the magnetic current at the head of the table. Miss Holmes was leaning forward as if graciously permitting the stranger to enter, yet herself lured by the wisdom—it was a comment on the narrowness of Moorish streets—that flowed from his lips.

"What idiots men are!" thought Catalina, viciously. "I suppose if I hung on his words like that he'd not hesitate a minute about being in love with me. But I'd like to see myself!"

XX

FTER dinner Catalina went up to her room to brush her hair—her head ached slightly—and sit for a while by herself before the evening walk. As a rule, she was the first to be down, but to-night she had a perverse desire for Over to come or send for her. She was suddenly tired of meeting him half-way, of being the frank, almost sexless, comrade; she wanted to be sought and made much of. Miss Holmes might be a second-rate, but she was an artist, and Catalina was not above taking a leaf out of her book.

"I'd rather be a hermit and have smallpox than bother forever as she does, according to Mrs. Rothe; and flatter men—not I! But I think I should be more feminine and difficult."

Her hands trembled a little as she burnished her hair, and once her eyes filled with tears; but she brushed them off with a scowl, and still refused to think. She had been too much with Over, and their friendship had run too smoothly for her thoughts to have been tempted to revolve about him when alone. There were times when she turned cold and then hot if he came upon her suddenly, and his touch and glance had thrilled her more than once. But she had kept it steadily before her that this was but a summer friendship and that in a short time she would be in California and he in England. It is true that her imagination supplemented the separation with a meeting in one country or the other not later than a year hence, but she had not permitted her mind to dwell upon the significance of his audible self-analysis in Madrid, holding that when a man doubted the depth of his sentiments the time had not come to take him seriously. Moreover, to speculate upon the significance of a man's attentions was not only indelicate but put her in the class with other girls, and nothing distressed her more

than to approach the average. Therefore, had she never sought to discover what lay beneath her daily pleasure in Over's society and her matter-of-fact assumption that for the time he was hers.

Nor would she permit herself to analyze her sense of disappointment to-night. Her soul had been floating on the high, golden notes of the nightingales, and not alone; it had plunged down with a velocity that left it sick and dizzy, but as Catalina banged the large pins into her hair she still refused to demand the reason.

The people were talking in the garden. She shut her window overlooking it and sat down before the one opposite. The moon had not risen; the street, lit by a solitary lamp, was full of shadows. It was easy to convert the shadows into swarthy men with turbaned heads and flowing robes, but she was not in a historical mood. Even a man with a long Spanish cloak folded closely about him and holding manifestly to the heavier shadows failed to arrest her attention. In spite of her admirable self-control her mind wondered uneasily why

Over did not call her, how he was occupied; for the time was passing.

Her eyes wandered to the height behind the Albaicin. There were lights; they might be watch-fires. It was not so long ago that that turbulent quarter had rung with the clamor of battle, of civil strife, that its gates had been secretly opened to Boabdil in the night, and his father or uncle been defied to come over and redden its streets. What were four centuries?

"I shall always have that pleasure, that resource," thought Catalina, arrogantly. "I can always take refuge in the past on a moment's notice. Where on earth can he be? Does he suppose I don't want to walk —as I haven't gone down? Or is he too interested—"

Her spine stiffened. She listened intently, then stood up silently and looked down. Over and Miss Holmes were standing in the doorway of the pension, talking. Catalina could not distinguish the words. Over had a low voice of no great carrying power, and Miss Holmes had neglected none of the charms that man finds excellent in woman.

But he was leaning to her words in a fashion that denoted interest, and oblivion of all else for the moment. In a flash Catalina realized just how attractive he was to women.

Still talking, they moved from the doorway into the street, and then down in the direction of the palace. Catalina leaned out with a gasp, hardly believing the evidence of her eyes. For a moment astonishment routed other sensations. Was it possible that Over was on his way to visit the Alhambra for the first time by moonlight with another woman?—that he was going for his evening walk at all without her? Never had he thought of doing such a thing before; they went off together, frequently alone, every evening. Even in Toledo he had come directly to the Casa Villéna after dinner, and sooner or later, by one device or another, had managed to carry her off for a stroll. But there he was, complacently walking down street with another woman, and not so much as a backward glance. And the other woman had white lace about her head and shoulders, and no doubt looked

like a lorelei. The only beauty she had ever heard Over praise was the beauty of fair women, which was as it should be. And Englishmen laughed at American distinctions. If this girl were second class, how was Over to find her out on a moonlight night in a tricksy frame, how discover that she wore her hair like a shop-girl? Doubtless, if he thought at all about the matter, he would elevate Miss Holmes above herself in the social scale. She at least did not suggest the cow-boy.

And still he did not turn his head. Perhaps he was only strolling for a few minutes with the new acquaintance, waiting for his usual companion to descend. Catalina leaned farther out. In a moment they passed the old mosque and disappeared.

She fell back from the window, unable for a moment to think coherently; the blood was pounding in her head. Her impulse was to run after them and twist her rival's neck. She panted with hate, with the desire for vengeance, with the lust to kill. She stood like a wooden idol, but she boiled with the worst passions of the ancient races

behind her. She conceived swift plans of vengeance. She would make friends with the girl, poison her peace of mind, kill her if she could not inveigle her into killing herself. The malignant, treacherous nature of the aboriginal controlled her, obsessed her. Civilization fell away; she was capable of the worst; she cared nothing for consequences. Literally, she wanted the enemy's scalp. Then, without premeditation, she wept stormily, like an undisciplined child—or a savage—beside itself. And then the obsession passed and she was horrified.

It was not thus her imagination had dwelt upon the great revelation. She had visioned love among the stars, and had expected—groping, perhaps—to find it there. But to discover it in a fit of jealous rage, writhing in the most ignoble of the passions, her soul shrieking for revenge—she descended to the depths of discouragement, humiliation. She doubted if she were worthy of being loved even by a mere man—for the moment she despised the entire sex for Over's weakness and inconstancy. Of course, like others, he had succumbed to this enchantress, who

didn't even wear her hair like a lady, and was therefore unworthy of even the rage she had flung after him. She longed to despise him so hotly that her love would be reduced to a charred ember, and thought she had succeeded; then it flamed all through her, and she sprang to her feet.

"There is one thing I can do," she thought, and lit the candle. "I'll leave to-morrow. Never will I go through this again, and never will I see him again if I can help it."

She had the instinct of all wounded things, and a terror of the emotions that had torn her. Pain she could stand, and had a dim foreshadowing that in solitude she might attain that dignity of soul that sorrow and meditation bring to great natures, but never the passionate conflict of emotions that confused her now. As she locked her trunk there was a knock on her door. She answered mechanically, and Mrs. Rothe entered.

"What—"

Catalina, who was sitting on the floor, sprang to her feet. Her hair was disordered and her eyes red. There was no use attempt-

ing to conceal anything from this keen-eyed woman, whose sufferings were stamped in the loosened muscles of her face. She stood silent and haughty. She would deny nothing, but nothing was further from her mind than confession.

"May I sit down?" asked Mrs. Rothe. "Have you a headache? I was afraid you must have, as you did not come down."

"My head doesn't ache, but I am sick of Spain. I am going to start for home tomorrow."

"Oh, I am sorry. It will be dreary without you. And I thought it so enchanting here. Can't I induce you to change your mind?"

Catalina sat down on her trunk, but she shook her head. "I want to go home," she said.

Mrs. Rothe turned her kind, bitter eyes full upon Catalina. "Don't run away," she said. "It is unworthy of you. And this means nothing. What is more natural—he being a man—than that he should accept the minor offerings of the gods when the best is not forthcoming? Moreover, when a

man has talked steadily to one girl for three weeks"—she shrugged her shoulders—"that is the way they are made, my dear, the way we are all made, for that matter, as you will discover in time for yourself. It is better to accept men as they are, and early than late."

"I never want to see another man again—and this was our first night in Granada. There was — had been for weeks — a tacit understanding that we should do every bit of it together—"

"But you disappeared. No doubt he thought you were indisposed—"

"I wanted him to come after me, for once."

"Oh, my dear, men are so dense. When they love us desperately they rarely do what we most long to have them. If I don't sympathize with you—well, I think of my own throes, not only at your age, but so often after. It is so easy to fall in love, so difficult to remain there. You can marry Over if you wish—and two or three years hence—the pity of it!"

"Do you mean that no love lasts?"

"In tenacious natures like yours it may. Nevertheless, there will be times when he will bore you, get on your nerves, when you will plan to get away from him for a time. A few years ago I still clung—in the face of experience—to my delusions. Then I would have held your hand and wept sympathetic tears. Now, I can only say, go in and win, but don't break your heart over an imagined capacity for love at an interminable high pitch."

"You must have loved Mr. Rothe when you married him," said Catalina, with curiosity, and feeling that Mrs. Rothe had opened the gates and bade her enter.

"I did," said the older woman, dryly. "For what other reason, pray, would I make a fool of myself, and disgust and antagonize those whom I had loved so long? What a fool the world is!" she burst out. "And writers, for that matter! They are always harping on the death of the man's love, upon the punishment that will be visited upon the woman of mature years who marries a man younger than herself! I am capable of the profoundest feeling, and I

have never been able really to love a man in my life. I have deluded myself again and again, and invariably the man has disappointed or disgusted me. This is my third husband. The first died, but not soon enough to leave me with a blessed memory. The second, whom I had found irresistible, developed into a gourmand with a bad temper. I lived with him for fifteen years. When I met Rothe I was forty, the beginning of the most critical period in the life of women of my sort—when if not happy we would stake our souls for happiness. It seemed to me that I could not continue to live without love, and yet that I could not die unless I had, if only for a day, loved to the full capacity of my nature. When I met Rothe and he fell head over heels in love with me — I was a very handsome woman five years ago—I was at first flattered; then his ardor struck fire in me and I made no effort to extinguish it. It was what I had waited for, prayed for, and I encouraged it, fanned the flame. I was convinced that it was the grand passion at last; and I went out to Dakota. I gloried

in the sacrifice, gloated over it. And in spite of divorce and scandal I suppose I was happy for a time."

"And now?" asked Catalina, breathlessly. She had forgotten Over and Miss Holmes. Never had she been so close to living tragedy. Mrs. Rothe, in her negligée of pale yellow silk and much lace, her ruffled petticoat and slippers of the same shade, indescribably fresh and dainty, and, in the light of the solitary candle, a beautiful woman once more, was to Catalina the very embodiment of "the world," and for the moment far more interesting than herself.

"Now! I hate the sight of him. I am bored beyond the power of words to tell. I have to remind myself that he is not my son, and when I do not long for my own son, who was far brighter, I long for a man of my own age to exchange ideas with, who will understand me in a degree. There are a few women with eternal youth in their souls, but I am not one of them. I am tired of all his little habits; the very expression of his face when he smokes a cigarette with his after-dinner coffee gets on my

nerves. I am sick of making-up and pretending to be interested in the things that interest a young man. I want to be frankly myself—of course, I should hate growing old in any case, but I am sick of being a slave—that is what it amounts to when you don't dare to be yourself. But I must keep up the farce lest I lose him, and the world laugh and once more remind itself of its perspicacity. I give him a long rope; he is still fond of me; my pride mounts as everything else fades away. There you are!"

Catalina had hardly drawn breath during this jeremiade. She no longer had any desire to run from her own pain. After all, what had Over done but take a walk with a strange girl in her own absence? She had beaten a mole-hill as high as a mountain. But she could think of nothing to say. In the bitter misery before her there was the accent of finality, and comment would have been resented if heard.

"I have told you all this," said Mrs. Rothe, "partly because the impulse after five years of repression was irresistible, part-

ly to show you that the great tragedy of a woman's life is when not the man, but she, ceases to love. Better far death and desolation, and a great memory, than a nature in ruins, and the magic that would rebuild gone out of hope forever. As for you—congratulate yourself that you are able to feel and suffer as you have done to-night. Over is a better sort than most. Marry him and prove that you are of greater and finer stuff than I. I should be delighted. And if this girl should develop into a rival of a sort, welcome the stimulation, and show your mettle—"

"I won't fight over any man!"

"Certainly not. Simply be more charming than she is. Nothing could be easier. You could not make the mistake of eagerness if you tried, but you can be obliviously delightful—and you know him far better than she does, and have no machine-made methods. Now go to bed and sleep, and ignore the episode in the morning. You went to bed with a headache and neither knew nor cared what Over did with himself."

XXI

THUS it came about that the next morning, not long after dawn, Catalina was leaning out of her garden window humming a Spanish air when Over pushed aside his curtain and looked up expectantly.

"Coffee?" he whispered. She nodded. He pointed down to a little table in the window in the wall. They stole like conspirators through the dark house and down to the garden. Over was first at the tryst, and never had he greeted her with such effusion. He held her hand a moment and gazed solicitously into her eyes with an entire absence of humor as he tenderly demanded if she had been ill or only tired the night before, and assured her of his disappointment in being cheated of their walk. His conscience hurt him, and he felt the

more penitent as he saw that disapproval in any of its varied manifestations was not to be his portion. For Catalina looked nothing short of angelic. Her eyes were a trifle heavy, as if with pain, but her beautiful mouth curled and wreathed with sweetness. She wore for the first time a white blouse and a duck skirt, and about her throat she had knotted a scarlet ribbon. The fine, soft masses of her hair looked as if spread with a golden net that caught the fire of the mounting sun, and she looked several years younger, fresher, more ingenuous than Miss Holmes, though older than herself.

She ground the coffee while he boiled the water, and when he alluded, with an enthusiasm that was almost sentimental, to their first coffee-making in Tarragona, recalling the solitary palm against the blue sea, her face lit up and her lips parted. So, all in a night, had their attitude of almost excessive naturalness towards each other dissolved into the historic duel of the man and the maid. Both were acutely sensible of the change, yet neither resented it, for it heralded

the new chapter and its unfolded mysteries. Catalina had the advantage, for she understood and he did not; he only felt the subtle change, and the conviction that she was even more provocative than during the episode of the mantilla.

"No one in the world can make such good coffee," she said, politely, as she sipped hers and looked through the bars at the dark arbors of the park. "I still had rather a headache when I awoke, but this is all I need. Did you go for a walk last night?"

She held her breath, but he replied, promptly: "I walked round a bit with Miss Holmes—that fair girl who sat at the head of the table. But the moon rises late and there was nothing to see. I was in bed by ten o'clock. I hope you will be quite fit to-night so that we can see the Alhambra by moonlight together. I am very keen on that."

"So am I," and she gave him an enchanting smile, but without a trace of self-consciousness. "How do you find Miss Holmes? I long to meet her. She attracts me very much."

"Oh, she is very jolly. Can talk about anything and has the knack of your race and sex for putting a fellow quite at his ease. You are certain to like her. She has given up her home life and wanders about Europe for the sake of her sister, who is an artist; has a deuced fine nature, I should say. What?"

"Nothing. Shall we take a walk? We can't get the cards for the palace for an hour or two yet."

"I hoped you would feel like a jolly long walk this morning. We really had no exercise yesterday, and after that ride from Madrid I feel as if I'd like to be on my legs for a week."

They walked for two hours along one of the country roads behind the Alhambra, racing occasionally, glimpsing many beautiful vistas, lingering for a while before the Generalife, the summer palace of the Moorish kings; Catalina gloating over the profusion and variety of the flowers, not only in the famous garden, but cropping out of every crevice of the walls themselves. As they sat in the warm sunshine of one of the

terraces she gave him another little lecture on the history of Granada in a curiously exultant voice that made him oblivious of the useful information she imparted. Never had he been so attractive to her as in this new rôle of the mere man endeavoring to propitiate his goddess, and happiness bubbled and sparkled within her; if by chance their eyes met her lashes played havoc with the expression of hers. She radiantly felt that he belonged to her; she obliterated the future and forgot the seductress. She informed Over that it was Granada, Spain, the golden morning, that made her happy, and was careful to remove any impression he might harbor that she was making an effort to please him; for pride and a diabolical cunning stood her in the stead of experience. She merely had put her moody, undisciplined side to rest and exhibited in high relief her luminous, exultant girlhood; and Over stared and said little.

But she was determined that if he did address her it should not be in direct sequence to her wiles, for she had a passionate wish to be sought, to be pursued. She would

continue to dazzle him with the jewels of her nature and make him forget the weeds and clay that had inspired him with uneasiness, but she would go no further.

"Come!" she exclaimed, springing to her feet. "We can get into the Alhambra now, and I simply cannot wait any longer."

"Do you know," she said, as they walked down the hill towards the fortress, "I have had an uneasy sense of being watched ever since I came here? I was conscious of it several times while we were exploring yesterday, and last night as I sat by my window for a few moments before I went to bed"—she stammered, caught her breath, and went on—"I felt it again; and in the night I woke up and heard two men talking under my window. I suppose there was nothing remarkable in that, but they stood there a long time, and one of the voices, although it was pitched very low, sounded dimly familiar. This morning, just before we reached the high-road I had again the sense of being watched—I am very sensitive to a powerful gaze."

Over, who was probably afraid of nothing

under the sun, was looking at her in alarm. "You know I have always said that you must not go out alone in Spain," he said, authoritatively. "And there is danger quite aside from your beauty. Not only are all Americans supposed by the ignorant, rapacious lower classes of Europe to be phenomenally wealthy, but Californians in particular. And doubtless California is a legend with the Spaniard. I am not given to melodrama, but there is a desperate lot over in the Albaicin."

"I don't see what could happen to me in broad daylight, and certainly I am not going to run after you or 'Lolly' every time I want to go out. What a bore!"

"Not for me. I wish you would promise—"

"Well, I'll be careful," she said, lightly. "I have no desire for adventures of that sort. They must be horribly dirty over in the Albaicin, and after our experience with Spanish banks it might be some time before I could be ransomed."

The Albaicin might be dirty and abandoned to wickedness, but they decided, as

they leaned over the parapet of the Plaza de los Aljibes before entering the palace, there was no doubt of its picturesqueness. Far beneath them sparkled the Darro, and beyond it, parallel with the Alhambra Hill, rising from the plain almost to the very top of the steep mountain spur, was another vast roof of pinkish-gray tiles. But here they could distinguish one or two narrow streets, mere cuts in a bed of rock, from their perch, and high balconies full of flowers between the Moorish arches, a glimpse of bright interiors, the towers and patios of a great convent where the nuns walked among the orange-trees and the pomegranates, the roses and geraniums. Not a sound rose from the ancient city; it might have been as dead as the turbulent race that made its history. It lay steeping, swimming, in the pink light that seemed to rise like a vapor from its roofs. It looked like some huge stone tablet of antiquity, with hieroglyphics raised that the blind might read.

"I shall come and look at this in every light," said Catalina, "so if I disappear you will know where to find me."

They entered the palace through the little door in the non-committal wall, and, after bribing the guide to let them alone, lingered for a time in the Court of Myrtles, where the orange-trees no longer grow beside the pool, but where the arcades and overhanging gallery are as graceful as when the court was the centre of life of the Comares Palace, first in this group of palaces. Then, through an arcade that abutted into a fairy-like pavilion, they entered the Court of Lions.

Probably the Alhambra is the one ruin in the world where the most ardent expectations are gratified. From a reasonable distance the restored arabesque patterns on the walls, like Oriental carpets of many colors, and raised in stucco, present the illusion of originals; and all else, except the tiles gaudy in the primal colors, on the many roofs which project over the arcades into the courts, and the marble floors, are as the Africans left it. The twelve hideous lions upholding the double fountain in the famous court must have been designed by artists that had never penetrated the African jungle nor visited a menagerie, and, as the

only ugly objects amid so much light and graceful beauty, serve as an accent rather than a blot. Upholding the arches of the arcades that surround the court are 128 pillars so light and slender, so mellowed by time, that they look far more like old ivory than marble. Above the arches the multicellular carving again looks like old ivory, and through them are seen the gay convolutions of the arabesques on the walls of the corridor. Above the cluster of shafts at the eastern end, which forms one of the two pavilions, the florid roofs multiply and rise to a dome of all the colors. Overhanging the north side of the court—in the second story—is a long line of low windows. They once gave light and glimpses of history to the captives of the king's harem.

"You must half close your eyes and imagine silken curtains waving between those slender pillars, which were meant to simulate tent-poles," said Catalina. "And Oriental rugs and divans in those arcades, and the lounging gentlemen of the court, and turbaned soldiers keeping guard, and wom-

en eternally peeping through the jalousies above. They must have seen this court red a thousand times: Muley Aben Hassan had two of his sons beheaded by this very fountain to please a new sultana; and when they weren't beheading under orders they were flying into passions and killing one another. And the women could look straight into that room over there where Boabdil had the Abencerrages killed because one of them, as I told you, fell in love with his sultana. Do you see it all?"

"I confess I don't," said Over, laughing. "But I see quite enough—too much would make me apprehensive. How would you have liked that life?" he asked, curiously, as they crossed to the Hall of the Abencerrages. "I mean to have been the sultana of the moment, of course, not one of those captives up there."

"I should probably have been nothing but devil," replied Catalina, dryly. "It would have given me some pleasure to stick a knife into Muley Aben Hassan, and to have applied a sharp stick to Boabdil."

They stood for a few moments in the lofty

room with its domed ceiling like a cave of stalactites, its fountain and ugly brown stains, and then Catalina shuddered and ran out.

"I can stand courts where murder has been done," she said, "for the sky always seems to clean things up. But that room is full of a sinister atmosphere. I should commit murder myself if I stayed in it too long."

The impression vanished and she moved her head slowly on the long column of her throat, smiling with her eyes, which met Over's.

"I hate ugly fancies and atmospheres," she said, softly. "And the rest of the palace looks like a pleasure house; only I wish there were furniture and curtains—it seems to me they could be reproduced as successfully as the arabesques and roofs. Now one receives the impression that they slept and sat on the floor."

They were entering the Room of the two Sisters, opposite the Hall of the Abencerrages, once the chief room of the sultana's winter suite. There are two slabs of marble

in the floor that look like recumbent tombstones. What their original purpose was legend sayeth not, unless it was to give an easy designation to a room which needs no such trivial spur to the memory. For the ceiling of this great apartment is one of the curiosities of the world. The dome is like a vast bee-hive, its 5000 cells wrought with the very colors of the flowers from which the ambitious builders brought their honey sweets. It might be a sort of Moorish heaven for the souls of bees, those tiny amazons who alone have demonstrated the superiority of the female over the male.

Catalina mentioned this conceit, and Over laughed grimly.

"When women are willing to do all the work—" he began, and then lifted his hat. Miss Holmes entered the room from the sala beyond.

She came forward with a smile of welcome, her manner quite that of a chatelaine welcoming the stranger to the halls of her ancestors.

"I am so glad I happen to be here," she said. "I know you are people whom guides

only bore. I have lived in the Alhambra three weeks now, and am thinking of offering my services at the office; but you may have them for nothing." She included Catalina in her smiling gaze. "I hope your headache is better," she added, politely.

"Yes, thank you," replied Catalina, who longed to scratch her. She reminded herself of her new rôle, however, and gave her a dazzling smile that filled her eyes with warmth and accented the gray coldness of the orbs, which, like her own, faced Over. "How I envy you for having been here three weeks!" she said. "I feel as if I couldn't wait to know, to be familiar with it all. Do you live in Spain?"

"If you call boarding in pensions frequented by artists of all the nationalities, living in a country, I have been here a year."

She piloted them through the rooms, reciting the information that lies in Baedeker, adroitly compelled by Catalina's intelligent questions to address the lecture to her. By the time they reached the queen's boudoir in the Torre del Peinador, Catalina noted

that the guide chafed visibly at being compelled to ignore the man, and it was evident by her wandering glances and the inflections of her voice that she not only admired the Englishman's good looks, but appreciated his social superiority over the gentlemen of the brush who so often were her portion at pensions. Here, however, it was obviously the woman who would be interested in the perforated stone slab in a corner of the floor, which may have been built to perfume a queen or merely to warm her, and as she and Catalina disputed amiably, Over leaned on the stone wall of the narrow balcony and looked at the splendid view of Albaicin and mountain.

Then Catalina whimsically determined to give the girl the opportunity she craved. Her interest in the conversation perceptibly waning, Miss Holmes was enabled to transfer her attentions to the man, and, with battery of eye and glance, convey to him her pleasure in dropping history for human nature. When his attention was absorbed Catalina descended softly into the long arcade which overhangs the Darro, and, after wan-

dering about at its extremity for a few moments and getting her bearings, sat down on the window-seat that looks upon the Patio de la Reja, with its neglected fountain and cypresses. They must pass her on their way to the Sala de los Embajadores. She was not sorry to be alone, and felt happy and secure, experiencing a passing moment of contempt for men in general, so easy were they to manage—a mood which assails every charming woman at times, and even on the heels of doubt and despair. But Catalina's spirit was too buoyant not to comprehend ideality in its flight, and she stared unseeingly at the dead walls and saw only what she had divined in Over.

She waited a long while. Coming out of her reverie with a start, she wondered how long it was and drew out her watch. It was half-past eleven, and, making a rapid calculation, she was driven to conclude that her cavalier had been absorbed by the enchantress for fully an hour.

She was too proud to go after them, but her fingers curved round the window-seat in the effort to restrain herself, and her spirits

plunged into an abyss of dull despair, emerging only on jealous and torturing wings to drop again. She realized the mistake she had made in the exuberance of her happy self-confidence; for a girl like Miss Holmes can make heavy running in an hour. On the steamer and in the various pensions where the Moultons had lingered she had often seen what no doubt was this same type of girl retire into a corner with the man she had marked for her own and talk—or listen—hour after hour; and Catalina had speculated upon their subjects, wondering that one human being could interest another for so long a time without the exterior aids of travel. The man had always looked as engrossed as the girl, and Catalina was forced to conclude that the mysterious arts were effective, and wished it were not forbidden to listen behind a curtain, but only that curiosity might be satisfied—she scorned arts herself. Now she wondered distractedly what this ashen-haired houri was talking about to make Over forget his very manners; but none of the long, desultory conversations, followed by the longer

silences peculiar to her experience with him, threw light on the weapons of this accomplished ruler of hearts; although the bare idea that they might be leaning over the parapet side by side in a familiar silence brought Catalina to her feet and turned her sharply towards the arcade. But at that moment she saw them coming.

Over was a little ahead of his companion, who was smiling with her lips, and he came forward with some anxiety in his eyes.

"I only just missed you," he said. "I thought you were there in the room lost in one of your silent moods. When did you come down?"

"Only a little while ago," said Catalina, sweetly, and she saw the eyes of the other girl flash with something like fear. She also noted that her cheeks were flushed.

"You have got a little sunburned," she said, with concern for a fine complexion in her voice. "It is much cooler down here. Have we time to go into the Sala de los Embajadores?"

And Over was made subtly aware of the second-rate quality of Miss Holmes's accent.

They entered the immense room, whose dome is like a mighty jewel hollowed and carved within, where Boabdil drew his last breath as king of Granada; and before Miss Holmes could open her lips, Catalina, with all the picturesqueness of vocabulary she could command at will, described several of the scenes of which this most historical room in the Alhambra was the theatre; not only throwing into low relief the academic meagreness of the other girl's knowledge, but insinuating its supererogation. Meanwhile she missed nothing. She saw the girl's color fade, her expression of almost supercilious self-confidence give place to anxiety, and as she turned away and stared out of one of the deep windows, it rushed over Catalina sickeningly that Over, in the span of an hour, had captivated her heart as well as her fancy. He must have made himself very fascinating! Catalina bungled her centuries; Miss Holmes in love would make a formidable rival.

The girl turned suddenly with mouth wholly supercilious and the light of war in her eyes. Catalina's face was as impassive as a mask. Miss Holmes walked deliber-

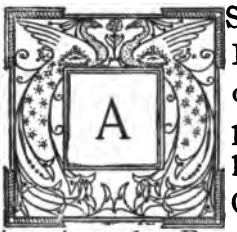
ately towards Over, her mouth relaxing and humor in her eye, but Catalina was too quick for her. She might be an infant in the eyes of this accomplished flirt, but she had imagination and a brain capable under stress of abnormal rapidity of action. She had pulled out her watch and was facing Over.

"The palace closes at twelve—for the morning," she said, without a quiver of nervousness in her voice. "It wants but a few minutes of twelve, and we never care for luncheon until one. Would you care to go down and make the usual futile attempt at the poste restante—or are you tired?"

"Tired? Let us go, by all means. I have had exactly one letter since I arrived in Spain. There surely is a batch here."

"I expect rather important ones." She turned to Miss Holmes. "Good-morning," she said, gayly. "And thank you so much. We are the hungriest people in the world for knowledge." And she marshalled the unconscious Over out, he lifting his hat mechanically to Miss Holmes, while admiring the sparkle in Catalina's eyes and the unusual color in her cheeks.

XXII



S they walked down the Empedrada, the most shadowy of the avenues in the park, Catalina's ungloved hand came in contact with Over's and was instantly imprisoned. For a moment she lost herself in the warm magnetism of that contact, wondering somewhat, but filled with a new sense of pleasure. But as she turned her head and met his steady gaze, half humorous, half tender, she made her obedient eyes dance with mischief.

"Beware of the Alhambra," she said, lightly.

"I am not afraid of the Alhambra," and although she turned her hand he held it fast.

"Aren't you?"

"You are very provocative."

She longed for the mantilla which had given her such confidence in Toledo, but swept him a glance from the veiled splendor of her eyes.

"I don't know whether I mind having my hand held or not."

But if this were diplomacy it failed; he tightened his clasp.

"I am not sure that I know *you*."

"I have heard you say that a good many times. You are not very original."

"I was thinking of to-day, particularly."

"Why to-day?" The wondering expression held her eyes. "I have never felt more natural, nor happy. I feel as if the mere blood in my veins had turned to that golden mist we saw on the vega this morning. I adore Spain!"

She spoke the last words in such a passion of relief that he brought his face closer to hers.

"I believe I'd give my soul to kiss you," he whispered. There was no humor in his eyes, and he looked the born lover; and the glades of the "sacred grove" looked the very bower of lovers. But Catalina's mo-

ment of response was over. Humiliated and furious with herself, she vowed on the spot that she would never again lift an eyelash to fascinate him. Love seemed lying in the dust, rocked back and forth by her experimental foot. He should come to her of his own free will, or go whence he came—with Miss Holmes, if he chose. She would be loved and wooed ideally, or die an old maid. But to bait—to manœuvre—to cross swords with a rival! For the moment she hated Over, and he might have departed on the instant with her blessing.

She had snatched away her hand and was almost running down the hill. He made no effort to recover her until they reached the Gate of Granada, and then they walked sedately down the white hot street together.

"Miss Holmes, it seems, has arranged rather a jolly affair for to-night," he said. "A dance in the Alhambra—in the Court of Lions. She has permission from the authorities, and has engaged some musicians. The moon rises at ten, and we will dance for two or three hours. How do you like the idea?"

"Well enough. I am not overfond of dancing."

"I am sorry. I hoped you would give me the first waltz."

"Well, I will if I dance. But dancing is not my forte, and I hate doing anything I don't do well. I suppose you don't dance any better yourself, though. Englishmen never do."

"Indeed! How many Englishmen have you danced with?"

"Well, I have heard they don't."

"I flatter myself I dance rather well. It would be more like you to judge for yourself."

"I'll see."

They reached the post-office after a hot walk through the town, there to meet with the usual official stupidity, or indifference, at the window of the *poste restante*. In vain Catalina adjured the somnolent person leaning on his elbows to look carefully through the R's and S's and O's. He replied that there was nothing, but that there might be on the morrow; the manager of the pension had already spoken to him.

The Travelling Thirds

They left the post-office with bristling tempers.

"It is a relief to hate something in Spain," cried Catalina. "And I hate the post, the telegraph, and the banks. There is a cab. I have had enough of walking for one day."

XXIII

FTER luncheon Miss Holmes put her arm through Catalina's. "Come into my room and talk to me a little while," she murmured. "I am so tired of all these men."

Catalina had stiffened at the contact, but pride made her yield at once. She turned with a smile in her eyes, and the other girl exclaimed, impulsively, "You are the most beautiful thing I ever saw in my life!"

"Oh!" said Catalina, melting; but it was characteristic that she merely accepted the tribute as her due and did not return it in kind.

The two girls presented an edifying spectacle for the eyes of puzzled man as they walked off, arm in arm; moreover, at the finish of an hour's chat in Miss Holmes's

cool little room they were very good friends, for women may hate each other as rivals but like each other as human creatures of the same sex. They have so many feminine interests in common, that man often dips over the horizon of memory while the mind is alive with the small and normal, only to resume his sway when it is vacant again.

Miss Holmes, sitting on the floor, her hands clasped about her knees, proved to be much like any other girl, and entertained Catalina with lively anecdotes of her experience in Europe. Unconsciously she revealed much that evoked Catalina's sympathies. She made her own clothes, and it was evident that her life was harried by small economies whose names Catalina barely knew. She was a piece of respectable driftwood in Europe anchored to a still more respectable sister, and the more remarkable that she still was able to suggest a young woman of the leisure class.

"Of course I must marry," she said, shrugging her shoulders. "Unfortunately, the only man I ever wanted to marry is a prince without a cent—you meet scions of

all the nobility in pensions; but that, of course, means that they are as poor as you are. I suppose that you—independent as you are—won't marry for ages?"

"I have no intention of marrying at present," replied Catalina, without the flicker of an eyelash.

"Lucky you! I haven't either, for that matter, although my prince threatens to descend upon me; and if he does—" She lifted her shoulders again. "Women are idiots when they fall in love. Marriages ought to be made by the state according to fitness. How do you like my scheme for to-night?" she added, abruptly.

"It is a stroke of genius. Fancy having a dance in the Alhambra by moonlight to carry away as a memory! Are you fond of dancing?"

"I adore it. It is the one thing I can do to perfection. I have actually been proposed to half a dozen times on the strength of my dancing."

Catalina turned cold. "What an odd reason for proposing! A man cannot dance with his wife."

"Well, you see, a man's head sometimes swims with his feet. Given a man who is fond of dancing and he is apt to think a woman perfection who dances to perfection."

Catalina rose abruptly. "I must go upstairs and rest for to-night. I have been on the go since daybreak. Thank you for asking me to your pretty room," she added, with the charming courtesy she had at command. "You have what the French call the gift of installation, and this looks as if you had always lived here. I can't even keep my room tidy."

"You have always had servants to keep it tidy for you," said the other, with her quick, sweet smile. She shook Catalina's hand warmly. "Come in often," she said, and there was no doubting her sincerity. "And put on your most becoming gown to-night. It will be a pleasure to look at you."

But although she was attracted to Catalina, and admired her beauty with the eye of the connoisseur, she had made up her mind to marry Over. Her love for the worthy but impoverished prince who had followed her about Europe for half a year

was a fiction of the moment, but Over had carried her off her feet. She had met scions of the continental aristocracies by the score, but it was her first adventure with an Englishman of the higher class who looked as if he would love with difficulty and make love with ardor. She had held his attention during the morning immediately in the wake of many sensations quickened by Catalina, and it is possible that some of their exuberance may have overflowed to her. She recalled that his eyes had sparkled and melted and dwelt ardently upon her own, that his tones had been laden with meaning more than once, that he had uttered many spontaneously complimentary things. She looked upon Catalina as a lovely and somewhat clever child who could have no chance in the ring with herself, but she had taken pains to make certain that her young affections were not involved. She might have hesitated before breaking an engagement. It must be added that she cared not at all if Over were rich or poor. An English aristocrat, handsome, charming, a guardsman — her heart ached with the romance of it.

XXIV

FTER supper they sat about the table in the garden until nine o'clock, the men and several of the women smoking; and there was much talk of art, of books, of travel, gossip of the studios, of politics. Until the day before it had been a party grown intimate through the association of several weeks, and to-night, at this their third meal, the three Americans and the Englishman glided insensibly into the circle. It was a new society for all of them, and they were interested according to their respective bias.

Rothe was somewhat surprised to find that untidy artists could yet be gentlemen not to say men. His wife felt a sympathetic interest in the individual, and wondered if all these nice people were very poor and

what their particular form of poverty was like; she had never come across artists in her charities. She longed vaguely to help them in some way without giving offence. And then she envied them their illusions, their faith, their enthusiasm, and wondered if the fount of eternal youth from which these endowments flowed washed from apprehension the everlasting pettiness of mortal life. Over was always interested when he was not bored, and Catalina pulsated with curiosity and thanked Heaven anew for her deliverance from the Moultons. She had spent the afternoon reading to Mrs. Rothe, then had taken a nap, ignoring Over's existence.

But she sat opposite him at the table and looked very pretty in the candle-light, her arms extended, her hands clasped, her lithe body erect, her attitude one of absolute repose; the eyes, only, smiled occasionally above the serenity of the rest of her face. Once both she and Over became conscious that they had drifted from the conversation and were listening to the nightingales singing in the park beyond the wall. He met

her eyes with a flash in his own, but she flashed defiance in response, and turned her attention to the German artist who was disputing hotly with the Frenchman, pounding the table and apoplectic with excitement. Miss Holmes with her admirable skill calmed the raging waters and scattered them into various channels. She was in white to-night with a black silk scarf about her shoulders and one end over her abundant fair hair; and the eyes of her devotees rarely left her face. The prince actually had arrived in the afternoon, and occupied the place of honor beside her, although she had contrived that Over should sit on her left; and she had played them against each other—or thought she had—throughout the evening.

The prince was a thick-set, melancholy looking man of middle years who had some reputation for historical research, a position of solid respectability wherever he went, and a turn for severe economy. His inconsiderable power to add to the gayety of the world was further depressed by the sense of his folly in falling in love with a penniless girl,

but he glowered across at Over and resolved anew to win her if they had to rusticate on his meagre estate for the rest of their lives. She was the only woman who had ever lifted the weight from his spirit, made him forget for a moment the contemptible condition into which, through no fault of his, his ancient family had fallen. If it had not been for this condition it is possible that he might long since have turned his back on the temptation of the American girl, for he held republics in such scorn that he would not have hesitated to break faith with the citizen of an illegitimate nation, as one wholly outside his code of honor and inherited sense of conduct. But this girl had brought sweetness into his life and he was grateful to her, and in his manner loved her.

She had considered him in her clear-eyed fashion, had pictured herself as his companion, well loved, no doubt, and with the entrée to the best intellectual society on the Continent; but she knew him to be far more selfish than any man she had ever met, and with a pride which, no matter how he might

love and admire her, would never permit him to forget that he was a prince and she a plebeian; it is only just to add that she might have belonged to the flower of American aristocracy and he would have made no distinction. It was always a risk for an American woman to marry a European aristocrat with his uncontrollable sense of social superiority not only over the inhabitants of the United States of America, but over those of every other nation but his own; and to marry one who took life seriously and was as poor as a church mouse was nothing short of foolhardy. But a prince was a prince, even if he were not the head of his family, and to become an indisputable princess was a great temptation to the self-made American girl—had been until she met Over. Now she would have sacrificed a prince of the blood with a malachite mine in Russia.

She had made herself very charming to Over throughout the evening, drawing him out, showing him to the others at his best, and he had been somewhat stimulated by the dull glow in the black, opaque eyes oppo-

site. As they separated to dress for the party he asked Catalina once more to give him the initial dance, and when she refused, positively, he immediately and eagerly asked the same favor of Miss Holmes. After a moment's sprightly thought and hesitation he was gratified.

Like most Englishmen of his class he was fond of dancing, although he regarded it as a sort of poetical exercise, and on the whole preferred golf; and one good dancer was much the same to him as another. He was far too practical to feel any desire to hold a particular girl in his arms in a public room where other men held other girls in conventional embrace; but this Catalina could not know, and ran up to her room angry and hurt.

Nevertheless, she dressed herself with elaborate care in an evening gown recently made in Paris, a white chiffon spangled with gold. It revealed the slim roundness of her neck and arms, and clasped her beautiful figure like mere drapery on a statue. She put a white rose on either side of the mass of hair she always wore low on her neck and

found a long scarf of golden tissue to protect her when the night grew chill.

When she joined the others in the sala there was a murmur of admiration, rising high among the artists, which she received with absolute stolidity. Over came forward at once.

"What next?" he murmured. "You surpass my expectations. I can say no more than that. But you must put that scarf about your shoulders directly you go out or you will take cold."

"Practical Englishman! I never had a cold in my life."

"Wonderful young person! Put it on at once. We are starting."

Miss Holmes looked like a lorelei with an American education, in pale green. Her sister was draped in sage green, and the other artist of her sex in red and yellow Spanish shawls. Mrs. Rothe wore an elaborate blue gown with an air of doing the occasion all the honor possible. Over, Rothe, and the prince wore the conventional evening dress; the foreign artists were in their velvet jackets, with the one exception of the Ger-

man, who had got himself up in the property costume of a Spanish grandee.

Miss Holmes draped a white lace shawl about her head and shoulders. "Come!" she said. "It is time to start." And she led the way down the dark street with her prince. She was to dance many times with Over, and amiably gave the brief interval to the admirer who was much too serious for even the stately quadrille.

Over and Catalina brought up in the rear. She drew close to him with a little shiver.

"I still have that sense of being watched," she said. "I can't understand why I should be so silly as to notice it. I am usually afraid of nothing—never had a nerve before." But she did understand, and resented. Over had roused and quickened all her femininity, and she longed for his protection, wondered at her former boy-like indifference to sympathy as to peril.

Over drew her hand through his arm. "It may be nothing and it may mean a good deal. Mind you do not wander off by yourself in the palace. If you do I shall be

hunting for you, and that will spoil my evening. This dance has upset our plans, but we must have a stroll together through some of those old courts and corridors before the party breaks up."

XXV

THE moon hung directly over the tower of Comares. In the arcade beside the Room of the Two Sisters was a mass of bright cushions and an Oriental carpet. Here Mrs. Rothe enthroned herself, and the melancholy and disgusted prince kept her company. The musicians fiddled and strummed in the pavilion at the top of the court. Wind was rising in the trees on the steep hill-side above the Darro, and the nightingales sang. The great rooms around the court, the low chambers above, were black with shadow, but the open spaces about the lions were lively with whirling figures and the chatter of women. The original party, which was too rich in men, had been reinforced by several American girls from another pension, and all had entered into

the gay spirit of the night except Catalina, who stood alone in the pavilion opposite the musicians, frankly miserable, and furious with herself for daring to suffer.

Over had danced no less than six times with Miss Holmes, whose dancing would throw a Hebe out of court. She was the triumphant belle of the evening — no sultana in her little hour had ever held prouder sway in these halls of the Moors; and where they, indeed, had been glad of one doubtfully devoted heart she was lightly spurning half a dozen. The men importuned her between dances, the foreigners extravagant in their admiration, Over consoling himself with manifest discontent when she gave her hand to another.

He had just completed his sixth waltz with her when Catalina had her inspiration. He had not looked at her since the dancing began. There was only one way in which she could compel his attention, and although her shyness rose to arms, her knees shook, and her breath came short, she set her teeth and glided down the arcade to the pavilion of the musicians.

It had been understood that after the first hour and a half there was to be an interval for lemonade and sweets and rest, during which they would sit on the cushions and admire the opposite arcade and the airy grace of the pavilions under the light of the moon.

"It must have been here that Muley Aben Hassan and Boabdil used to sit with their courts while the minstrels — or whatever they were in those days — tried to amuse them, and the nautch-girls danced, and the captives above envied the captives below," Miss Holmes was beginning as they arranged the cushions, when several of the party gave a low cry, and the hostess paused with her mouth open. A figure had risen before them in the moonlight, slim, young, veiled, the very eidola of those forgotten women the number of whose heart-beats had depended upon the nod of a tyrannical voluptuary. Only her eyes, long, dark, expressionless, were revealed above the gold tissue of her veil, and Over alone recognized her instantly. He had missed her as they assembled, and was about to go in search of

her when she appeared. He held his breath, and the others, one or two of the girls giggling hysterically, hardly knew whether to be frightened or not.

Then the low, soft, dreaming strains of music crept over to them and she began to dance. She had known the old Spanish dances all her life and loved them with all the wild blood in her, despising the more the conventional whirl of the drawing-room. She danced none of these to-night, however, but an improvisation, born of her knowledge of Moorish traditions, the place, and the hour.

As Over realized what she purposed he stepped forward with the intention of stopping the performance, enraged that other men should be in the audience, but arrested by his distaste of a scene. In a moment he sank down on his cushions, wondering that he had doubted her, for it was apparent even in the first few moments that in spite of the graceful abandon of her dancing there was to be nothing to suggest the coarseness of the women that had danced on that spot before her.

But if the swinging and swaying and bending and whirling of her body were without suggestiveness they were the very poetry of beauty. The scarf was bound about her head and over her face below the eyes, but she held a point in either hand, her arms sometimes extended, at others describing curves that made the delicate tissue flutter like the many wings of tiny birds. The spangles on her dress, the diamond buckles on her slippers were 1000 points of light, for the moon was poised directly overhead and flooding the court. The perfume of the scarf stole into the senses of the staring company and completed the illusion, delicately brushing with sensuousness what was otherwise an expression of the rhythm of life, the dreaming of an ardent but virginal soul. So a nautch-girl may have danced for the first time before a king, ignorant then of what was expected of her, dissolving in the joy of rhythmical motion, of innocent pride in her own young beauty.

The arches between the company and the dancer, the fountain above the lions rising in a silver veil behind her, and beyond it

the white, shining arches with their moving shadows, the distant warbling of the nightingales rising above the swooning music, the Oriental mystery in the eyes above the veil—not one of her audience but surrendered himself, although, in superficial fashion, all had recognized her.

And then, while their senses were locked, while they were hardly conscious whether they slept or waked, a strange and terrible thing happened. From the Room of the Two Sisters beside them the figure of a man leaped like a sword from its scabbard, caught the dancer in his arms, and disappeared whence it had come.

There was a fatal moment of incredulity; then Over leaped to his feet and ran into the dark room. But he had no idea which way to turn, and had lost himself in the Sala de los Ajimeces beyond when he heard Miss Holmes cry, sharply:

"He mustn't go alone, and at least I know every foot of the palace. The man will make for the underground rooms or climb out of one of the windows and down the hill to the Albaicin."

The word completed Over's horror, but as he hastily rejoined the party, now voluble in the Room of the Two Sisters, he despatched Rothe and the Spanish artist for the police, and then with little ceremony ordered Miss Holmes to lead the way.

Catalina, in that leap from the dark room to her swaying form, dreamy with its own motion, had recognized Jesus Maria; but in the swift flight that followed her face was pressed so hard against his shoulder that she could neither see nor cry out. Her feet struck against narrow walls, but her arms were pinioned in that strong, deft embrace, and rage inwardly as she might, he controlled her as easily as if she were bound with cords. It was only when she felt him lift her slightly as he vaulted over a window-ledge that she found her opportunity. With a swift writhe of her body she freed her hands and beat upon his face with all her strength, which was not inconsiderable. He was stumbling down the steep declivity below the Comares Tower, and he paused a moment to take breath.

"What do you want?" she cried, furiously. "Money?"

He pressed his left hand over her mouth and dexterously caught both her hands in his right.

"Yes," he said, grimly. "The señor your uncle can bring that with the golden señorita. It is you or she and the money, too. Keep quiet!" he said, violently. "If you cry out I will run a nail through your tongue."

Catalina knew there was no time for any such ceremony at the moment, and the moment was all she had. With another sharp wrench she freed her head and hands, struggled to press her knee against his chest, and clawed his face with her sharp nails. The cliff was but little off the perpendicular, irregular of surface, and a wilderness of high shrubs, rocks, and trees. For a man to make the descent in daylight and unencumbered was no mean feat; but to endeavor to accomplish this at night, the moon hidden more often than not by the trees and Comares, with a struggling woman in his arms, tried even the superb strength and skill of the Catalan. He set her down and

attempted to wind the long scarf more tightly about her mouth and throat and to bind her hands. But she was too quick for him. She made no attempt to run away, knowing the futility, but she braced herself against a rock and fought him. She felt not a spasm of fear, but she thrilled with the consciousness that she fought for more than her liberty undefiled; she fought for freedom to fly back to Over and have an end of subterfuge and delusion. In those moments, as she fought and kicked and scratched like a wild-cat, she had a vivid and serene vision of herself as Over's wife. She knew it to be writ as clearly as if the hand of destiny traced it on the silver disk above, and while her body obeyed its primal instincts, her soul sang.

The Catalan was desperate. He cursed his folly in not stationing his confederate on the Darro instead of in the hovel in the Albaicin; but he had feared confusion and felt contemptuously sure of his ability to manage a mere girl. But he had had no experience of girls whom ranch life had made vigorous and fearless, and whose

fathers had taught them the principles of boxing. Catalina parried his attempts to give her a stunning blow as deftly as she filled her nails with his skin and hair, and she was so well braced he could not trip her. Once he made a sudden dive for her feet with his hands, but she leaped aside and his nose came in contact with the rock.

Suddenly he turned his head. Far above, in the windows of the Hall of the Ambassadors, from which he had made his escape, he heard the sound of voices. That moment was his undoing. With the leap of a panther Catalina was on his back. She pressed her knees into his sides, dragged his head back with one arm, while with the other she pounded his unprotected face. He gave a mighty shake, but he might as well have attempted to throw off a wild-cat of her own forests. He might exhaust her in time, but so long as she had strength she would hang on, and with a low roar, that portended hideous vengeance, he started once more down the bluff.

As Edith Holmes led the race through the many corridors and apartments that lay

between the court and the Hall of the Ambassadors she knew that the game was hers if she chose to play it. There was but one place in Granada where an outlaw would be secure, and that was in the Albaicin, and she knew the Alhambra too well not to be sure of the route Catalina's abductor would take. But it was simple enough to persuade Over that the man would be more likely to take an underground route, escaping at the favorable moment by some opening known only to his kind.

The descent to the baths was on the way to the Hall of the Ambassadors, and as she ran down the long corridor her brain whirled with the obsession of the place, and she fancied herself for a moment one of the favorites who had reigned here in the days of Moorish splendor until a fairer captive threatened her own youth and beauty and love of life with a silken cord and a brief struggle in one of the chambers above. Over's apparent devotion during the first part of the night had roused in her all the passion of which she was capable, and she could feel his hot, short breath on her neck

as they ran. She had watched his surrender to Catalina's beautiful dancing and his wild, instinctive leap to her rescue with bitter jealousy and fear. In a flash she had seen Catalina for what she was—a girl to rouse all the romantic passion in a man; and in all her loveliness, her ideal womanhood, and her changing moods, she had been his constant companion for three weeks in Spain! But thrust out of sight—the creature of a gypsy — internationally besmirched— Her feet turned to the threshold leading down to the old Moorish bath, where ten minutes could be wasted. But the American girl in her suddenly revolted. Another American girl was in hideous peril, and she shuddered with disgust even more than with pity.

She whirled about. "Prince," she whispered, "you and Helmholtz go down there and search, but I feel sure he has gone out one of the windows." And she ran on to the Hall of the Ambassadors.

They searched it at last and hung out of the windows. Far below a faint sound came to their ears, but they could not determine its nature. An instant later they heard a

short but infuriated roar, followed by the sharp call of a woman. Over was already on the other side of the window when Miss Holmes caught his arm.

"Don't!" she cried, hysterically. "It is almost certain death. He is sure to have confederates!"

Over gave her a look of haughty surprise and shook her off. The Frenchman thrust a pistol into his hand.

"I never go without one here. Don't hesitate to shoot."

Over groped and stumbled down the hill, but with far more agility than the encumbered Catalan. There was no path, the thick brush and rocks were everywhere, and the moon made the shadows under the trees the heavier. But when a thin Englishman has spent the greater part of his life on his feet and out-of-doors he is little likely to lose his balance or skill even on a steep wilderness designed by the cunning Moor as a pitfall for the enemy.

He was half-way down when the way cleared and he saw, several yards beneath him, a curious, stumbling figure, half black,

half white. In an instant he suspected its meaning, and although he was obliged to laugh he paused and gave a sharp halloo. Catalina answered him with what breath was left in her, and he heard the glad note in her broken cry. He ran on, but in a moment the man stopped abruptly and endeavored once more to shake off his burden. Catalina leaped from his back and ran to one side, bracing herself once more. Over aimed his pistol and fired. The man gave a wild scream of pain, tumbled to his knees, regained his feet, and fled. Catalina ran up the hill a few steps, then, suddenly exhausted, leaned against a tree. But Over bore down upon her, and when she saw his eyes she opened her arms.

THE END

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